

## ELEMENTS OF VEDIC RELIGION

water Mere earth cannot destroy *pāpa*, and mere water cannot purify

17 It is appropriate that every word should denote *Brahmā*. Words like cow, horse and man, that connote the common features of the species (*ākṛitī*), denote the bodies that exhibit this feature, for the feature cannot exist apart from the body, and the object needs the feature in order that it may be perceived. Similarly the quality of an object has no independent existence, and the object appears as possessing the quality. Hence words denoting qualities denote the objects that possess them. The word 'white' means a white object. In the same way bodies of *jīvas* cannot exist without the *jīvas*, and they are the aspects in which the *jīvas* appear. The word *deha* therefore means a *jīva* in a *deha* body, and the word man a *jīva* in a human body. Products of matter and *jīvas* cannot exist apart from *Brahma*, and they are the aspects in which He appears. Every word denoting a product of matter or a *jīva* according to worldly usage, therefore denotes *Brahma*, and this is its primary meaning. As *Brahma* is not known except from the *veda*, persons ignorant of the

veda use words as denoting merely a product of matter or a *jiva*, but this meaning is incomplete

18 Here it is necessary to grasp clearly what the word 'body' (*sarira*) means. A body is that substance, which an intelligent person in every way supports, controls and uses for his own purposes, and which exists only to serve him. This definition applies to the bodies of *jivas*, for they are supported by the *jivas* by their presence within them, and the moment the *jivas* leave them, they begin to decompose, and soon perish. That they are controlled by the *jivas* and used for their own purposes is patent. Similarly products of matter and *jivas* are supported by *Brahma* by His presence within them and also by His will. This is stated in a *vedic* text

By the unobstructed command of that  
*Akshara Gurur*! heaven and earth stand  
 supported, etc (*brihad* V 8 8)

That *Brahma* controls everything will be seen from the quotation in para 14. And He is the lord of all things—

He has every one in His grip, He controls every one, he is the lord of every one  
 (*brihad*, VI 4-22)

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This point is clearly put in the following verses of the *bhagavad gītā* .

Earth, water, fire, air, ether mind, *buddhi* (*mahat*) and *ahamkāra*—*prakṛiti*, thus divided into eight forms, is Mine. This is the lower *prakṛiti*, there is another *prakṛiti*, higher than this, which consists of the *jīvas* and which supports this world. Know that also as Mine. All things that exist have sprung from the union of these two *prakṛitis* and are therefore Mine (VII-4 5 and 6).

Hence everything in the world is the body of *Brahma*. The definitions of the term 'body' current in the world are inadequate, as they do not cover the case of *Brahma* and of freed *jīvas*, who may take up any number of bodies. The definitions are (i) a body is that which helps one to enjoy the fruits of past *karma*, (ii) It is a compound of earth and other elements, (iii) It is supported by *prāṇa* in a fivefold form, and (iv) It is the support of the senses. A proper definition should cover all cases in which the word is used either in the world or in the *śāstra*.

19 We have explained that every word, that ordinarily denotes a product of matter or a *jīva*, denotes *Brahma*. When this view is

taken, all *vedic* texts will convey consistent teaching, viz, those that affirm of *Brahma* freedom from imperfections, omniscience and the like, those that state the *jiva*, who is ignorant, and suffers misery, attains release by meditation on *Brahma*, those that describe the evolution and dissolution of the world, and those that identify *Brahma* with the universe. The author of the *brahma sūtras* has adopted this view, and this is what the author of *Śrī Bhāṣyam*, the great *Rāmānuja*, has expounded. This is the religion of the *veda* and the religion of *vaishnavas*.

## SECTION IV

### MATTER

20 HAVING shown that matter, the *jīvas* and *Brahma* differ from one another in their *svarūpas* and in their natures, we proceed to state what the *śāstra* teaches about them. First as to matter—It is known as *prākṛiti* and is thus described

*Prākṛiti* the creator of products non-intelligent, appearing in eight forms without birth or death, she is a cow without beginning or end, the creator of the great elements and of the diverse products of evolution, white black and red, and yielding every amusement to the all Ruler. She is impartial, persons of dull intelligence not knowing themselves enjoy her (*mantrika upaniṣad* I 3, 5 and 6)

Matter in the first place is non-intelligent (*achetana, achit*). This means that it is without the attribute known as *jñāna*, and cannot therefore see or enjoy. It is also *jaḍa*, i.e., it does not show itself or other things, and make

them fit to be spoken about. An earthen jar, for instance, standing in a dark place, cannot make itself known and it needs a light to show its existence. On the other hand, a light needs no such help. Even the light merely removes the darkness that prevents the contact of the eye with objects. What really shows objects is the attribute *jñāna* of the *jiva*. Matter, being devoid of this property, is *jada*. The *jiva*, on the other hand, makes himself known without the intervention of anything else. He is therefore said to be *jñāna* and being the possessor of the attribute *jñāna*, he is intelligent (*chetana*, *chit*). In both these respects matter differs from him.

21. Next, matter is without beginning or end. This means that at no moment in the past was it absent, and that at no moment in the future will it cease to exist. This fact is otherwise stated thus—no grain of matter can be created, nor can it be completely destroyed. But its nature is ever to change. At one time, when it is in a subtle condition, the changes are similar, and do not call for different names. When a sheet of water is agitated by a breeze, ripples are formed, but

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they are similar. At another time, when it comes into a gross condition the changes are dissimilar, and diverse names are given to the products. A lump of earth under the potter's hands appears as jars, cups, plates and the like. And though the substance is the same, its conditions are different. There is no such thing as origination or destruction of a substance. When the lump of earth is made into a jar, the jar condition is the origination of the jar and the destruction of the lump. This view is known as the *sat kārya* theory.

22 Next, matter is a substance with three *guṇas* or qualities, known as *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. All of them exist in matter at all times, but in the gross condition, in which we see it now, one or another of them predominates over the others. They cannot be perceived by the senses, as other qualities of matter are perceived like colour, taste, touch or smell, but their predominance must be seen by the effects which they produce. In the expression 'white, black, and red' occurring in the quotation in para 20, the term 'white' indicates the quality *satva*. As this quality

enables one to see a thing as it is, it is appropriately indicated by the term 'white,' which represents purity. The term 'red' indicates the quality *rajas*, and this is appropriate, as that quality causes desire, and aversion. Desire is being drawn towards an object, and aversion is being repelled by it. When in the pursuit of an object of desire an obstacle is thrown in, desire appears as anger, which is directed towards the person who is believed to have been the cause of the obstruction. When there is reason to think that an injury will come to the object, desire appears as fear. As desire appears in these forms, the three terms *rāga* (desire), *bhaya* (fear), and *krodha* (anger), are frequently mentioned together in the *bhagavad gītā* (see II-56, and IV-10). Desire in a high degree becomes unwillingness to give away from one's possessions. This is known as *lobha*. The quality *rajas* also makes one restless. The term 'black' indicates the quality *tamas*. This quality prevents one from seeing a thing as it is, it produces an unwillingness to act, and brings on sleep. In the subtle condition the three qualities are balanced, and the effects referred to do not appear.



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23 In the quotation in para 20 matter is stated to appear in eight forms and to be creator of products. The eight forms are *prakṛiti*, *mahat*, *ahamkāra*, and the five *tanmātras*, and the products are the five senses of perception, the five organs of actions, the mind, and the five great elements—in all twenty four *tatvas* or substances. In the condition of cosmic rest (*pralaya*), matter becomes so subtle, that it cannot be separated from *Brahma* even as His body. In this condition it is known as *tamas*. When it begins to evolve, it becomes sufficiently gross to be capable of being separated from *Brahma*. From this *akshara* comes forth, from *akshara avyakta*, from *avyakta mahat*, and from *mahat ahamkāra*. The differences among these conditions of matter are thus illustrated. *Tamas* that cannot be separated from *Brahma*, is like a grain in a granary, the next condition of *tamas* is like the same grain put into the soil, *akshara* is the same grain, when it is wet and its parts are loosened, *avyakta* is the same, when it has swollen, and *mahat* is the same, when it sends up a shoot. In the condition of *ahamkāra* the predominance of one *guna* or

another becomes pronounced, and it appears in three forms, known as *sātvika ahamkāra*, *rājasa ahamkāra* and *tāmasa ahamkāra*. From the *sātvika* variety the ten senses and the mind come forth, and from the *tāmasa* variety the five great elements—ether (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*tejas*), water (*ap*), and earth (*prithvi*). The *rājasa* variety co-operated with the other two varieties in the formation of their products. Each great element passed through an intermediate stage known as *tanmātrā*, and as there are five great elements, the *tanmātras* are five.

24 That these are the products formed, and that evolution takes place in this order is shown by a text of the *subāla upanishad*. It describes dissolution, which begins with the element earth, and ends in the absorption of everything in *tamas*, and evolution is in the reverse order beginning with *tamas* and ending with earth. The text is

Earth is dissolved in water, water in fire, fire in air, air in ether, ether in the senses, the senses in *tanmātras*, *tanmātras* in *ahamkāra*, *ahamkāra* in *mahat*, *mahat* in *avyakta*, *avyakta* in *akshara*, *akshara* in *tamas*, and *tamas* became one with *Brahma*.

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In the above, two clauses need explanation—*uz*, 'ether in the senses' and 'the senses in *tanmatras*' The term in the original meaning 'dissolves' is *liyate*, this is not found in these clauses, though it is found in the clauses before and after them Hence the meaning is that ether and the senses unite The former is dissolved in the *sabda tanmātra*, and the senses unite with it The *tanmātra* and the senses are then dissolved in *ahamkāra* The plural of the word *tanmatras* was not intended, for reference is made to the *sabda tanmātra*, which is one

25. Matter, being without intelligence, cannot evolve without direction by an intelligent being, and it is stated

She enters into the willing of *Brahma*, directed by Him, she comes into the gross condition (as the great elements) (*mantrika upanishad*, verse 1, 4)

*Brahma* does not, however, direct the evolution of matter as a potter directs the change of a lump of earth into vessels of various shapes and sizes The lump of earth is known as the material cause, and the potter as the operative cause, and both causes are different For the

earth, being non-intelligent, cannot direct the change from one condition to another, while the potter is unable himself to change in this manner, for he does not possess an unfailing will. But *Brahma* stands apart from everything else, and He is all-knowing and omnipotent. He is therefore both the causes of the evolution, i.e., He Himself evolves and becomes the various products stated in the preceding para, and He needs no one's direction in this matter. The *chândogya upanishad* states

He willed 'I will become many and to that end I will evolve' (VI-2-3)

Here the Creator willed Himself to become many, He was therefore the material cause, and as this becoming was by the same Being that willed, He was also the operative cause. He became the various products as a baby becomes successively a boy, a youth, a middle-aged person and an old man. The terms *tamas*, *akshara*, and the rest mean *Brahma* appearing as *tamas*, *akshara* and the like, for every word, as explained in para 17, denoting a product of matter according to worldly usage, denotes *Brahma*. *Brahma* in *tamas* as His body

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became *akshara*, in *akshara* as His body He became *avyakta*, in *avyakta* as His body, he became *mahat*, and so on. Thus every product from *akshara* down to earth came directly from Him. And this is stated in the *mundaka upanishad*

From Him came forth *prāna*, mind, all the senses, ether, air, fire, water and the all-supporting earth (II-1-3)

26 This evolution is known as *samashti* evolution. There is another known as *vyashti* evolution, which consists in the making of products appearing in diverse forms and bearing diverse names. This is 'becoming many' as stated in the *vedic* text. For this purpose the five great elements were compounded together, so that in the products thus formed all of them might appear. This work is thus described

That same *Devatā* willed 'I will enter these three *de atas* as the inner ruler of this *jiva* and make diverse names and forms. I will make each of them a triple compound'. The same *devatā* entered these three *de atas* as the inner ruler of this *jiva*, and made diverse names and forms, of them He made each triple (*chando* VI-3-2 to 4)

This composition was for the purpose of making the elements fit to form products,

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kinds—*detā* bodies, human bodies, bodies of the brute creation and the bodies of vegetables. In the bodies of the brute creation there are several varieties, the bodies of those that live on land, of those that fly in the air, and of those that move about in water. In the vegetable kingdom the bodies appear as trees, shrubs and creepers. Among human bodies also, though they are of the same shape, there are differences, men's bodies and women's bodies, bodies with large or small brains; and bodies suited to particular climates. In objects of enjoyment also endless differences appear in food and drink, clothing, and articles of luxury. Into these products the *jīvas*, that were to be embodied in this world, were made to enter, each according to his *karma*, and *Brahma* entered with them as their *ātma*. Thus one that has good *karma* attains a strong and healthy body in pleasant surroundings, but one that has bad *karma* attains a weak and sickly body in an uncongenial environment. This is stated in a *vedic* text—

Those that return here, if they have good *karma* reach good births—birth as a *brūhmaṇa*, as a *kṣatriya* or as a *vaiśya*

Those, that return here, if they have bad *karma*, reach evil births—birth as a dog, as a hog or as an outcaste (*chandala*, V-10-7).

Owing to this entry into every product of a *jiva* and *Brahma*, it is an aggregate made up of the three elements; and *Brahma* appears in the form of every product.

27. Now, what is the purpose of this evolution? *Brahma* cannot be said to have worked for Himself; for He has by nature whatever one may desire; and there is nothing, which He has not, and which He has to gain by the evolution. Hence the only purpose is amusement, and this is stated in the quotation made in para 20 'Yielding every amusement to the all-Ruler'. The evolution serves the *jivas* also, as they experience the fruits of their past *karma*, and they obtain bodies in which they dwell, objects, which they enjoy, and the senses, which they use as instruments in such enjoyment. This is stated in the quotation in para 20—'Persons of dull intelligence, not knowing themselves, enjoy her.' The persons are said to be of dull intelligence, as they do not perceive that the pleasure, that they get from sense objects, is petty, that it is mixed

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with pain and that it is short lived. And this is due to their not knowing themselves. They identify themselves with their bodies, and seek merely to satisfy their senses. They do not know that there is very superior pleasure, free from the defects pointed out, that may be attained by self realisation or by meditation on *Brahma*. There is also a higher purpose for the evolution. As when a school is opened after a long vacation in order to give students an opportunity to learn, so after the *pralaya* ends, the world is made, and the *jivas* are given an opportunity to profit by experience, to learn that they are other than their bodies and senses, and that they exist only to serve *Brahma*, and to take such steps as will qualify them to occupy the high position that is due to them. For this purpose they are given bodies and senses, and therewith the capacity to use them. The *veda* is given to them, in order to know the right from the wrong, and to see the means by which *Brahma* may be reached. If on receiving these gifts, they run after sense objects, will not the *veda* lament that they are persons of dull intelligence?



28 Before closing the section a few remarks are necessary to show the nature of the bodies in which they dwell and of the instruments which they use. The body is a mixture of the five great elements with *mahat* and *ahamkāra*. This is stated in a *vedic* text—

This *ātma* \* \* \* is full of earth, full of water, full of air, full of ether, full of fire, and full of what are other than fire (*ṛigveda*, VI-4-5)

Thus the five great elements are stated, and 'what are other than fire' are *mahat* and *ahamkāra*. That the composition of the body is as stated is evident from the following verse of the *bhagavad gītā*—

The great *bhūtas* (elements), *ahamkāra*, *buddhi* and *avyakta* (XIII, 5)

This means that the body is made up of seven grades of matter, which are products of *avyakta* or *prakṛiti*. The word *buddhi* denotes *mahat*.

29 The senses are eleven—the five senses of perception, the five organs of action and the mind. The senses of perception are located in the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, and the

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skin , and they respectively perceive colour, sound, smell, taste and touch The organs of action are located in the tongue, the two hands, the two feet, the excretory and sex organs , and their actions are speech, action like the taking of an object, going on roads, excretion and procreation These five organs are required by the *jiva* as his instruments, while he dwells in a body, and their functions differ from those of the senses of perception See the quotation in para 45 *infra*, in which they are enumerated along with the senses of perception with the kinds of work that they do The number of the senses is sometimes stated to be fourteen, including *chitta*, *buddhi* and *ahamkāra* These are the names given to the mind, when it thinks, resolves and attaches itself to something , but the mind is one The number is therefore only eleven When a lower number is stated, reference is made to the particular function then under consideration

30 These senses should not be confounded with the organs of the body, in which they are located When the *jiva* is in the deep sleep condition, they are united with him, and when

he awakes, they go forth from him, each to its place. This is stated.

When he sleeps and sees no dreams of any kind, he is then one with this *prāṇa* (*Brahma*). Then speech becomes one with the sleeper with all its activities, the sense of sight with all its activities, the sense of hearing with all its activities, the sense of mind with all its activities. When he awakes, as from a burning fire sparks go forth in all directions, so from that *Ātmā* the *jīvas* go forth, each to his place, from the *jīvas* the senses, from the senses their activities (*kaushī*, III-39 and 40)

In this quotation speech should be taken to represent the other organs of action, and the senses of sight and hearing to represent the other senses of perception. It is because the senses are not the parts of the body, in which they are located, the *vedic* text—

From Him come forth *prāṇa*, mind, all the senses, ether, air, fire, water and the all-supporting earth (*muṇḍa*, II-1-3)

states that they come forth from *Brahma* in the form of *ahamkāra*

31, What is the size of the senses? A *vedic* text states

When *prāṇa* follows the *jīva* out of the body, all the *prāṇas* follow it, and get out of the body (*bṛihad*, VI-4 2)

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From this mention of going out of the body, it is clear that the senses (which are denoted by the term *prāṇas*) are of limited dimension. When they go out, they are not seen by by-standers. Hence they are subtle. Though they are of limited size, they can in the absence of obstruction grasp numberless things. The term atom (*anu*) applied to them in the *brahma sūtras* should be taken to mean that they are of limited dimension, but that they are not sufficiently gross to be capable of being perceived. They are not like the *jīva* of the smallest size possible, this is accepted with regard to the *jīva* on the authority of a particular text.

32 *Prāṇa* is another instrument of the *jīva*. Air (*vāyu*) by a change of condition becomes *prāṇa*, but it is not a new substance like fire and the rest. It is not an element like fire, but it is an instrument of the *jīva* like the sense of sight and the rest. For in a place, which describes certain discussions among the senses it is mentioned along with them, and it will be appropriate to do so, only if it is of the same class as they. It is also specially mentioned as one among the *jīvas'* instruments.

covered by the term *prāṇa* thus—'That which is the principal *prāṇa*' And the service, that it renders to him, is the supporting of the body and the senses It is thus stated There was a dispute among the senses, as to which was the greatest, and they appealed to *Prajāpati* who said

On the departure of which the body is seen to be most despicable, that alone is the best (*chūndo*, V-1 7)

This was tested by the departure of speech and the other senses out of the body, one after another The other senses functioned as before, but when *prāṇa* began to depart, all the rest were threatened with extinction *Prāṇa* supports the body and the senses in five forms as *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna* As *prāṇa* it purifies the blood, as *samāna* it promotes digestion as *vyāna* it is concerned with the circulation of the blood, as *apāna* it throws out the waste products, and as *udāna* it takes the *jīva* out of the body in death But *prāṇa* and the other four are not different substances, on the ground that their functions and names are different They are *prāṇa* alone, for it is stated ' *Prāṇa, apāna,*

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*vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*—all this is *prāna* only' Hence *prāna* is one, and *apāna* and the rest are its conditions. The remarks in para 31 as to the size of the senses apply to the size of *prāṇa* also.

## SECTION V

### JIVAS

33 NEXT as to the *jivas* There are four attributes, without which it is not possible to think of a *jiva* These are known as *svarupa nirupaka dharmas* (attributes that describe the *svarupa* of an object) They are that the *jiva* is an atom in size, that he is *jñāna*, that he is bliss, and that he is free from impurities The *vaiseshika* holds the view that the *jiva* is omnipresent, and the reason which he gives for the view is this An object to be enjoyed by a *jiva* is produced at a distant place, and this must be due to connection with his *adrishṭa*, (a capacity created in him by his *karma*) This connection would not be possible, unless he were present at that place To the question why he does not then perceive objects at all places, he replies that he perceives only where his body remains This view is untenable, as the *jiva* is said to go out of his body, when he dies to go to the heaven world and

to return therefrom. If he were omnipresent, these actions could not take place. These statements are thus made

With that light this *ātman* gets out through the eye through the head or through other places in the body (*br̥had* VI-4-2), These, that depart from this world, all of them go to the moon alone (*lauṣhi* I-9), From that world he returns to this world to do actions (*br̥had*, VI 4-6)

It is possible to explain the going out of the body by stating it to be separation from the body of one that remains where he is, but the going and the returning cannot be so explained. The *jīva* himself must go and return. He is not therefore omnipresent. He cannot be of medium size, for when he enters a body larger than himself, he will not fill it completely, and when he enters a smaller body, a portion of him will remain outside. He cannot expand or contract so as to suit the body that he has to enter, for as will be shown presently, he does not change in his substance. He must therefore be an atom (*anu*). This is stated

That *ātman* is *anu* and should be perceived with a pure mind, the *ātman* in whom *prāṇa* remains in five forms (*munda* III-1-9)



The *sietāsiatara* first describes him thus

He who is united to resolves to do various things, and to enjoy their fruits, and to the notion that he can do anything independently, in consequence of the qualities of the mind in the form of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and of the qualities produced in himself by them, is of the size of his thumb and is bright like the sun. He is also seen to be of smaller size, for he is of the size of the pointed end of a goad (*zra*)

The *upanishad* then states its own view thus.

If the hundredth part of the end of a hair be divided into hundred parts, the *jiva* should be known as one such part (V-7 and 8).

Hence, the *jiva* is only an atom in size

34 Next, the *jiva* is *jnāna*, i.e., he shows himself without help (see para 20). This is shown by the following text

What is the *ātmā*, He who is a knower, self-proved and who abides within the heart in the midst of the senses, is the *ātmā* (*brīhad*, VI-3-7)

What is self-proved is *jnāna*. He is also bliss, i.e., he is most agreeable to himself. This is not perceived in the waking condition, for the *jiva* is engrossed in the pursuit of outside objects. But when he is in deep sleep, he

perceives that he is agreeable, for when he rises from sleep, he states 'I slept pleasantly'. This means that he experienced pleasure. He does not then perceive any outside object, he does not know *Brahma*, on whom he then rests; and the pleasure must therefore come from himself. If by the practice of *karma yoga* he becomes disgusted with sense objects, and has obtained the power to control his senses and the mind, he can then sit in meditation (*yoga*) on himself. He will then experience

The greatest delight, which *buddhi* (attribute *jñāna*) can grasp, but not the senses, being engaged in *yoga* he shows no inclination to rise from it, having reached it, he does not regard any other gain as superior to it, and he is not shaken even by heavy sorrow (*bhagavad gītā*, VI-21 and 22)

And he is *amala*, i.e., free from impurities in his nature. This is stated

The *ātmā*, who is free from *karma*, free from old age, death, grief, hunger and thirst, who has unchanging objects of desire, and whose will is never frustrated, should be sought, and should be meditated on (*chāndo*, VIII-7-1)

35 The *jīva* is eternal. That is there was no moment in the past, in which he did not

exist, and there will be no moment in the future, in which he will cease to exist. This is stated

The *jiva*, who is fit to become all knowing is not born, nor does he die. He does not spring from anything and was never anything else, for he is unborn undying, ever-existing and ancient (*kaṭha* II 18)

The original has the term *upaśchit*, which means all knowing. This does not apply to him in his present condition. he will become all knowing in due course. Even in his present condition he is without the liability to birth or death in his nature. A material product like an earthen jar, comes from a lump of earth, but the *jiva* does not spring from anything. The jar was a lump of earth before but the *jiva* was not anything else at any time. Even matter ever exists in its substance but it changes in its substance and receives a new name, but the *jiva* never changes in his substance in the same manner. In describing *Brahma* the *upaniṣad* states

His name is the unchanging among the unchanging. *Prāṇas* (*jivas*) are unchanging, and He is unchanging among them (*bṛihad*, IV-3 6)

This means The *jīvas* do not change in their substance like matter, they are therefore *satya*—unchanging *Brahma* is also unchanging like them, but while they undergo contraction and expansion in their attribute *jñāna*, *Brahma* is exempt from a change of this kind He is therefore *satya* among the *satya*

36 The *bhagavad gītā* explains why it is that the *jīva* does not change in his substance

Know that to be imperishable, by which all this is pervaded (II-17)

By the term 'all this' reference is made to all things other than the *ātmās* The totality of the *ātmās* pervades the totality of the bodies, as oil pervades oil-seeds The argument, which the verse states, may be put into logical form thus—The *ātmā* does not perish, for it pervades everything else, and is on that account subtler than they A gross thing cannot injure what is subtle This fact is put in a concrete form in verses 23 and 24

Him (the *ātmā*) weapons do not cut, fire does not burn, water does not wet, and wind does not dry He is incapable of being cut, burnt wetted or dried

Here four states of matter are referred to, and they represent all other states, not one of which can injure him in any way. Another argument as to the *jivas'* imperishability is stated in verse 18:

He is not perishable; because he is not the known.

He is perceived as the knower, but not as the known; and perishability has been seen only in what is known; and it cannot be asserted of the knower. Verse 25 brings the subject to a close in these words:

He is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable, and immutable.

The first term means that he is not perceived by the senses, as outside objects are; he shows himself; and every act of consciousness assumes as a fact that he exists. The second term means that he does not belong to the same class, as outside objects, and should not be thought of as being of the same nature. The last term means that being an unique object, perishability seen in outside objects should not be asserted of him.

37. Here a doubt arises. A *chāndogya* text states 'Did you enquire about that *Adesha*

(controller), hearing about whom everything not heard before is heard about' (Vi 1-3) This means that by knowing *Brahma* everything would be known. As *Brahma* Himself by a change of condition appears as the universe, as a lump of earth appears as a jar, *Brahma* the cause, is identical with the universe, the product, and the universe is known by knowing Him. In the universe the *jiva* being included, he is a product, how can he be said to be eternal? Reply The *upanishads* state that in all conditions *jivas* and matter are the bodies of *Brahma*, and that He is their *atma*. He therefore ever appears as *jivas* and material products. At one time the bodies of *Brahma* become so subtle, that they cannot be spoken of as separate from Him. *Brahma*, appearing in the forms of the *jivas* and matter in this condition, is in the causal condition. At another time the bodies of *Brahma* become gross, they appear in diverse forms and receive diverse names. *Brahma* appearing in the forms of *jivas* and matter in this condition is in the evolved condition. When He changes from the former to the latter condition, the matter

element, which was without sound and other attributes, changes in its substance, and becomes possessed of sound and other attributes in order that it may become objects of enjoyment. The *jiva*-element undergoes changes in its attribute *jñāna*, which expands in such a manner, that he may experience the fruits of *karma*. The controller-element also changes. His condition, being now clothed in the other elements in this condition. The change from one condition to another is common to all the three elements. When a substance changes its condition and becomes fit to receive a new name, it is said to be a product. In this sense the *jiva* is a product, and he receives the name *deva* or *man*, though in his nature he is neither the one nor the other. But as he does not change in his substance like matter he is said to be eternal and immutable.

38 Next, the *jiva* is an intelligent person (*chetana* or *chit*). This means that he is the seat of the attribute *jñāna*. This is a shining substance, showing itself and other objects to its seat, the *jiva*. When it contracts an object, the *jiva* perceives the object and perceives the attribute *jñāna* at the same time. It is the

*jīva* that reaps the benefit of this perception, but not the attribute *jñāna*. He is therefore said to be *pratyak*, and the attribute to be *parāk*. The substance is said to be an attribute of the *jīva*, as it rests in him, as it is inseparable, and as it exists to serve him. It is not an attribute, as the red colour and fine smell are the attributes of a rose, for while the colour and smell have no existence apart from the rose, this substance, while resting in the *jīva*, is capable of spreading all around. It is owing to this feature of the attribute *jñāna* that though the *jīva* is an atom, and abides within the heart, he is able to perceive what goes on throughout the body. When the *jīva* remains bound by *karma*, it can contact objects only through the senses, and the *jīva* is not therefore all knowing, though he is so in his nature. By *yoga* he may become capable of extending the attribute so as to reach a number of bodies, and one *Saṁbhari* is said to have taken as many bodies as he had wives, and directed them all. When the *jīva* shakes off all *karmanas*, the attribute expands and becomes infinite. The facts stated are proved by the following texts



'Who is the *ātma*? 'He, who is a knower, self-proved, and who abides within the heart in the midst of the senses, is the *ātma*' (*bṛihad*, VI-3-7), (ii) This *purusha* ever knows, (iii) He is indeed a seer, a hearer, smeller, taster, thinker, knower, doer, a shining *ātma*, a *purusha* (*prasma*, IV-9), (iv) He sees with the mind (the attribute *jñāna*) these noble qualities that are in the *Brahma*-world (*chāndo*, VIII-12 5), (v) The *jñāna* of the knower does not perish (*bṛihad*, VI-3 30), (vi) He is fit to become omnipresent (*ṣveta* V-8)

The first three texts show that the *jīva* is the seat of the attribute *jñāna*, and the fourth that it remains in release (*moksha*), and does not then disappear, as stated by the *raiseshtā*. This is expressly affirmed by the fifth text, and the sixth states that the attribute fully expands in release. It does not mean that the *jīva*'s *svarūpa* (substance) expands for as already stated it is immutable. The expansion is therefore of the attribute.

39 Next, the *jīva* is a doer (*kartā*). The *veda* contains injunctions like the following

Let one that desires *starga* do *yāga*, let one, that desires release, meditate on *Brahma*

They are addressed to one, that desires to enjoy either fruit, and that will experience it

eventually, and direct him to adopt the means pointed out. The object of the injunctions is to induce one to act, and this is done by creating an impression on his mind. If matter and its modifications were the doers, as alleged by some, they could not be moved in this manner. Hence, the injunctions will serve their purpose, only when the intelligent *jñā*, who will enjoy the fruits of action, is the doer. He is stated to be a doer in the following texts. A *bṛihad āraṇyaka* text cites the analogy of a great king, and states

In the very same way he (the *jñā*) takes hold of these senses and moves about in his own body according to his pleasure (IV 1-18), *ījñāna* (the knower) performs *yajnas* and does (worldly) actions also (*ana* V-1)

In the second text the term *ījñāna* denotes a knower, but not the attribute *jñāna*, for it is his essential attribute, and its owner is denoted by the term. As *ananda* (bliss) is the essential attribute of *Brahma*, he is denoted by the term *ananda* in the text—'If that unlimited *ananda* does not exist' (*ana*, VII-1). Similarly here

40. Those, that allege that the doers are the *guṇas* of the *jīva*'s body, rely on the following verse of the *bhagavad gītā*.

In regard to actions done by the *guṇas* of the body, each in its own way, one, that has forgotten himself by confounding himself with the body, thinks 'I am the doer' (III-27).

This verse means: in actions of worldly men the doership of the *jīva* is brought about by his connection with the *guṇas*, and it is not caused by his nature. The verse thus discriminates between what happens, and what does not happen, and assigns doership only to the *guṇas*. See the following verses:

The body, the *ātmā*, the five organs of action, *prāṇa* and *īśvara*, the fifth in the list of causes. Whatever work of body, tongue or mind, good or evil, a mortal begins, these five are the causes. This being so, whosoever for lack of knowledge sees himself as the sole cause does not see correctly (XVIII-14, 15 and 16)

Here the doership of the *jīva* is taken as a fact; and it is stated that while action depends on five things beginning with the body and ending with *īśvara*, one, that thinks that he alone is the doer, does not see correctly.

41 The doership of the *jīva* comes from *Brahma* alone. This is stated in vedic texts—

He has entered into men and controls them ,  
He is the *ātmā* of all (*yajur*, *ashṭaka*, III-11-10). Who stands in the *ātmā*, who is within the *ātmā* whom the *ātmā* does not know whose body the *ātmā* is, who rules the *ātmā* from within, He, the inner ruler is your immortal *ātmā* (*brīhad*, V-7-26)

This is explained by the *bhagavad gītā*,

I am seated in the heart of every one , from Me flow remembrance knowledge, as well as inability to see (XV-15). The ruler of all has mounted all beings on the wheel of the body and living in their hearts, He makes them go round and round with the help of attractive sense objects (XVIII-61)

42 If *Brahma* controls the *jīvas* as stated, the commands and prohibitions of the *veda* will appear to be purposeless. It should therefore be examined in what sense this control is exercised. *Brahma* gives to all *jīvas* alike instruments in the form of body, senses and mind, and the capacity to think and act, and for this reason their doership in general depends upon Him. Their doership in regard to individual acts also depends upon Him, for they need His assent. In making the choice,

however, they possess freedom and become subject to injunctions and prohibitions. Freedom means that when they have the capacity to act in accordance with their wishes, no one prevents them.

43 This explanation raises some doubts.

(i) Why is the assent of *Brahma* needed?

*Reply* As shown by the quotation from the *bhagavad gītā* in para 40 *Brahma* must join in the action, which the *jīva* wishes to take. He is only one of the five causes enumerated, and *Brahma* is the principal cause.

(ii) Does not *Brahma* become liable as the assentor? *Reply* No, the assentor is not touched by the fruits, for He is the ruler, and the same authority, by which He is known states that He is so. This may be shown by an example. When property is owned jointly by two persons, one of them cannot give away his share to a third person without the other's consent, and as he procures the consent, the fruit belongs to himself. Similarly, though both the *jīva* and *Brahma* must join in the act, one by making the choice, and the other by giving assent, yet the fruit of the action is reaped by the former alone.

(iii) When one chooses to do something injurious to himself, does it indicate the possession of mercy in *Brahma*, who though able to prevent it, gives His assent? *Reply* It is giving the *jīva* the fruit of his choice. He shows His mercy in several ways. He gives to all *jīvas* bodies and instruments suitable to the doing of good and bad deeds and power to use them at pleasure. He gives them the *veda* to know His will, and to enable them to carry it out, He enters into them as their *ātmā*, and co-operates with them. The *jīvas*, having been thus helped of their own choice do good or bad deeds, and are rewarded or punished according to their deserts. Mercy means inability to see another's suffering, and a desire to remove the suffering without an eye to one's own good. This is shown when an offender gives up the idea of disobedience. With this alone *Brahma* is pleased, excuses the numberless sins committed by him in countless world-ages, and Himself makes efforts to bestow on him indescribable bliss.

(iv) In para 42 it was stated that in making the choice the *jīva* possesses freedom. The following text contradicts this statement.

For it is He alone that makes one do a good deed, whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds, it is He alone that makes one do an evil deed, whom He wishes to lead downwards (*kaushī*, II 64 and 65)

*Reply* This does not apply to all persons. If one be exceedingly loyal, *Brahma* creates a liking in him for very good actions, which will eventually lead to His being reached. If he be exceedingly disloyal, he creates a liking in him for actions that are the reverse. These are therefore exceptional cases.

(v) Does not *Brahma* give the *jīva* a body of a particular kind, and place him in an environment suited to his past *karma*? Does he not bind him by this means? *Reply* *Brahma* shows no particular desire in the matter. Having an eye on the existing *karma* of the *jīva*, he wishes to make him experience pleasure or pain, and makes objects of enjoyment appear before him, but this is not done from any intention of making him do any new *karma* to procure some other fruit. A person lights a lamp, so that another may see a jar, if a third person also sees the jar, the first must be said to have been indifferent as regards this third person, for he neither makes

him see nor prevents him. Similarly, *Brahma* is indifferent, while the choice is made. *Brahma* acts like a king, who gives his minister the necessary means, and leaves him free to act, and who himself does nothing. Freedom is not incompatible with subjection to another. The *jiva* is no doubt subject to previous tendencies, and is led by the desires which they produce, but he is not driven as by wind or water. The springing up of a desire does not destroy the capacity to act. A person has a desire for the food placed before him, if he knows it to be mixed with poison, he is seen to overcome the desire to take it. Another going to gather fuel, when he learns how a great treasure may be got, gives up his task. Similarly, when the *jiva* becomes aware of the sin that he will commit, or of some great fruit, that he may get, he can control his desire. He is therefore free.

44 Lastly, every *jiva*, whoever he may be, is entitled to enjoy *Brahma*, who gives limitless bliss by His *svarupa* (substance), by His figure, by His attributes, by the persons and objects whom He controls and by His doings. All freed *jivas* share this fully with Him.



Bound *jivas* have their full share in it, when they render themselves fit for it. At present, they are under the influence of *avidyā* in the shape of beginningless *karma*. They do not therefore know the real nature of *Brahma* and of the universe that He controls, nor are they aware of their own nature. Owing to endless differences in their *karmanas* there are endless differences in what supports them, in what nourishes them and in their enjoyments. Above men there are *devas*, *gandharvas* and the like, below men there are beasts, birds, snakes, trees, bushes, creepers, grasses and the like. In spite of such diversity all of them are entitled to the enjoyment of the same degree of bliss as *Brahma* Himself.

45 In paras 33 to 44 the *jiva* as he should be, was described. Let us next examine what he is. When he is born, *i.e.*, enters into a body, he is for a long time unable to help himself. He can express his feelings only by crying. When he is able to move about, he runs great risks by not being able to discriminate between what is good for him and what is injurious. When he becomes a young man, healthy and vigorous, he is led by his senses.

and the mind follows them This is stated in a *vedic* text

As the sea receives all the waters, so the sense of touch receives all touches, so the sense of taste receives all tastes, so the sense of smell receives all smells, so the sense of sight receives all colours, so the sense of hearing receives all sounds, so the mind receives all resolves, so the heart receives all learning, so the hand receives all actions, so the sex organ receives all pleasures, so the excretory organ receives all excretions, so the feet receive all goings on roads, so the sense of speech receives all the *vedas* (*bṛihad*, IV-4-11)

The sea receives all waters from land, and never becomes full Similarly, the senses perceive their objects without number, and in many ways, but they are not satisfied The motor organs are ever engaged in their work, and are never satisfied The mind is full of resolves, and is never at rest So the owner of these instruments is distracted in numberless ways, and can never concentrate his mind on any object He identifies himself with his body, and regards as related to himself the *jīvas*, that are connected with him by mutual *karmas* He speaks of them as his family, as

his castemen, as his countrymen, and toils for them. He thinks that he can do anything with his own power, and as observed by the *bhagavad gita* he states

This has now been obtained by me, I will attain this desire, I have got this wealth, this other wealth also will come to me. This enemy has been destroyed by me, I will destroy other enemies also. I control others, but no one controls me, I have every enjoyment, I have become all this with my own ability, I have strength and comfort, I am a rich man, I am born of a high family, who exists that is my equal? (XVI-13-14 and 15)

The *jiva* has to put food and drink into his body every now and then. If he does not do so, he feels the pangs of hunger and thirst. He cannot get everything that he desires, and losing what he has, he is filled with grief. Old age comes in due course, his eyes become dim, he becomes hard of hearing, his teeth fall, and he experiences difficulty in digesting his food. Owing to weakness of body he needs the help of a stick to go about. Though the body has become feeble, his desires are as strong as ever, and being unable to satisfy them, he is miserable.

The union is thus described

Like water dropped on water, the knower becomes one with *Brahma* and inseparable  
This place of sleep is the *Brahma world*  
great king (*Ibid* 32)

The purpose of going to *Brahma* in deep sleep is thus stated with an illustration

As an eagle or kite soars here and there in the sky and tired draws in its wings, and hastens to its nest in the very same way this *jīva* hastens towards that place where he does not desire any object, sees no dreams (*Ibid* 19)

His senses being tired, he goes to *Brahma* for rest and being refreshed, he rises again for action But for this merciful arrangement, he would go mad It was stated that the sleeper does not know what is outside This is because all his senses are tired, and have become one with him, suspending their activities This is stated

When he sleeps and sees no dream of any kind he is then one with *Prāna* (*Brahma*)  
Then speech becomes one with the sleeper with all its activities, the sense of sight with all its activities, the sense of hearing with all its activities, the mind with all its activities (*kaūśhī* III)

He does not know what is inside for the mind also is inactive He does not therefore

'know himself' (*chāndo.*, VIII-11). This means that though he knows himself as *pratyak*, and finds himself to be bliss, he does not remember what he was in the waking condition. This is stated in the following text :

In that place father ceases to be father; mother ceases to be mother, world ceases to be world, *devas* cease to be *devas*, the *vedas* cease to be *vedas*. In that place the thief ceases to be thief, the murderer ceases to be murderer, the outcaste ceases to be outcaste, the *pulhāsa* ceases to be *pulhāsa*, the *śramaṇa* ceases to be *śramaṇa*; the penance-doer ceases to be penance-doer. The *jīva* is not followed by good deeds, is not followed by bad deeds, for he has transcended all griefs of the heart (*bṛihad*, VI-3-22)

Being unconnected with *karma* during deep sleep (see the last two clauses but one), and being therefore unconnected with a body, the relationships based on the possession of a body cease to exist for the time being. Hence father and mother cease to be father and mother. He does not depend upon any support; hence world ceases to be world. He does not then require anyone to look on him with helpful eyes; and *devas* cease to be

*devas* for him. He is not then subject to commands and prohibitions, and the *vedas* cease to be *vedas* for him for the time being. Being then pure, he cannot commit theft or murder. And being unconnected with a body, the distinctions based on the body do not touch him. The *jiva* does not then know even *Brahma*, though he rests on Him. This is stated

As bees make honey, taking it from various trees, and making all the drops into one substance, and as the drops in the collection do not discriminate thus 'I am the drop from this tree, I am the drop from that tree,' so, dear, all these beings, uniting with *Sat*, do not know, 'we are united to *Sat* (*chāndo* VI-9-1 and 2). These rivers starting towards the east flow eastward, these streams starting towards the west flow westwards, and reaching the sea, they flow into the middle of it, and become one with it, they do not there recognise themselves thus— 'I am this', 'I am this'. In the same way, dear, all these beings returning from *Sat* do not know 'we return from *Sat*' (*Ibid* VI-10-1 and 2).

48 From the union of the *jiva* with *Brahma* in deep sleep it must not be supposed that he is released from the bondage of *karma*. The *karman*s done by the sleeper should be

experienced by him alone, until he knows the truth and strives for perfection. Next, the sleeper on waking recognises himself thus—‘I who went to sleep am the very same that awakes’. Next, a *vedic* text states:

Whatever they were before—whether a tiger a lion, a wolf, a boar, a worm a moth, a gnat, or a fly—that again they become (*chūndo*, VI-10-2)

Lastly, the injunction in regard to striving for release will become meaningless, if every person, on going to sleep, should be released from *karma*. Hence the sleeper is not released from all limitations and does not attain his true nature. In regard to the sleeper it is stated.

In truth he does not know himself thus ‘I am he,’ nor these beings (*chūndo*, VIII-11-1)

As to one that is released from bondage it is stated

Reaching the highest Light, he appears in his own form (*chūndo*, VIII-12-2). He becomes his own master (i.e. he is no longer subject to the bondage of *karma*), he may move about in all the worlds according to his wish (*Ibid* VII-25-2). The seer sees everything, he attains everything in every way (*Ibid*, VII-26-2)

Hence the sleeping person is still within the wheel of births, but for the time being all his

instruments of perception and action are tired , he is incapable of perception and enjoyment he finds a resting place in the highest *Ātmā* , and being refreshed he rises again for new enjoyment

49 Let us next examine what happens when the *jīva* dies : e when he is separated from his body Of him it is stated

When he becomes thin from old age or from fever or other illness his breath comes up As a mango *udumbara* or *pippala* fruit is loosened from its stalk in the very same way this person is severed from these parts of the body (*bṛhad* VI 3 36)

Then all his senses and *prāṇa* become one with him This is stated

As *śūtras* those entrusted with the duty of punishing offenders *sūtas* and heads of villages meet a king and his consort in the same way all *prāṇas* go to the *Ātmā* when his breath comes up at the end of his life (*Ibid* VI 3 38)

*Ugras* and *sūtas* are particular castes The term *prāṇas* includes *prāṇa* all the senses and the mind The mode of union of these with the *jīva* is described in a *chāndogya* text

The speech of this person that departs from the body unites with the mind the mind



with *prāna*, *prāna* with *tejas* (element fire), *tejas* with the highest *Devatā* (*chāndo*, VI-8-6)

In this text the term speech (*vāk*) should be taken to include all the other senses. *Prāna* first unites with its lord, the *jiva*, and with him unites with *tejas*. For the second *bṛihad āraṇyaka* text quoted above shows that all *prānas*, including *prāna* itself, unite with the *jiva*. It goes out of the body along with the *jiva*—

Him, who goes out of the body *prāna* follows,  
going out of the body (*bṛihad*, VI-4-2)

Though the Jamna first unites with the Ganges and then flows into the sea, the statement that the Jamna flows into the sea is not inappropriate. Similarly the statement in the text that *prāna* unites with *tejas* is not inappropriate. The term *tejas*, denoting the element fire, should be taken to include the other elements, for as stated in the *bṛihad āraṇyaka* text quoted in para 28 the *jiva* goes about enveloped in all the five elements. The elements with the *jiva* unite with the highest *Ātmā*, who is in his heart. As the union in the case of deep sleep is for the purpose of giving the *jiva* a

respite from the turmoils of the day, so the union in the case of death is for the purpose of comforting him after suffering the pangs of separation from the body. The places in the body, through which the *jīva* gets out, are thus described

The end of the heart of this person shines, with this light this *ātmā* gets out through the eye, through the top of the head, or through other places in the body (*brāhad*, VI-4 2)

By the expression 'end of the heart' reference is made to the entrance into a capillary vessel

50 Where does the departing *jīva* go? This is stated

They, that remaining in the village perform *yāgas*, carry out works of public utility, give away from their possessions, and do similar things, go to smoke, from smoke to night, from night to the dark fortnight; from the dark fortnight to the half-year of the sun's southward course. They do not go to the year. From the half-year to the world of the *īśtis*, from the world of the *pitris* to ether, from ether to the moon. They become *soma* king (*chūndo*, V-10-3 and 4)

The term 'smoke' denotes the *devatā* in charge of smoke, and he carries the *jīva* on

his journey. The terms in the text, that denote periods of time, should be similarly understood as denoting *devatās* employed on the same errand. By the expression 'become soma king' it is meant that the elements, in which he goes up, become a divine body fit for enjoyment that awaits him in the moon. This enjoyment is not, however, perfect, for he becomes an instrument in the hands of the *devas* for their own enjoyment. This is stated

They are the food of the *devas*, then the *devas* eat (*chāndo*, V-10-4)

The term 'food' should not be understood literally. Like food, they become instruments of enjoyment to the *devas*. They use them for their enjoyment, as men use beasts here. This is also stated in *bṛihad āraṇyaka* (III-4-10). The *jīva* has to serve the *devas*, as a beast serves man, there is this difference—many beasts serve one, while he serves many *devas*. The *devas* are jealous of men being taken away from their service by turning their attention to *Brahma*. If one beast be taken away from a person, he regards it as a loss, what will be his feeling, if many beasts be taken away. So with the *devas* in regard to men

## 51 Even this enjoyment does not endure -

There they dwell till all the karma to yield fruit there is expended. Then they return by the very same path by which they went. They go to ether, from ether to *īyā* (air), being *īyā*, they become watery vapour, being watery vapour, they become cloud, being cloud they become rain cloud, being rain cloud, they come down as rain (*chāndo*, V 10 5 and 6)

The text means that the descending *jīva* is merely in contact with air, watery-vapour, cloud, rain-cloud and rain. The taking up of a divine or human body is for experiencing pleasure or pain. But here there is no occasion for it, and the descending *jīva* attaches himself to air and the rest and becomes like them. Owing to the absence of a gross form, he cannot be perceived to be separate from them. He is denied the pleasure of taking up air and the rest as his bodies, for they serve as the bodies of certain *devatās*, who use them for their own enjoyment, and he cannot use them at the same time. Nor can he become the *devatās* themselves, for they were at the beginning of evolution placed in charge of what they control, and will exercise their functions to the very end of the current world-age, and

cannot make room for a *jiva* descending every now and then

52 The further progress of the descending *jiva* is thus described

They are born here as paddy or *yata* (a kind of grain) herbs or trees, gingelly seed or black grain, and the like From them escape is more difficult Whoever eats food or emits semen they (the descending *jivas*) become those persons (*chūndo*, V-10-6)

Here also the descending *jiva* is merely in contact with the grain, with the food, with the man and with his semen Where the experiencing of pleasure or pain is intended, there will be mention of *karma* leading thereto Here no mention of *karma* is made, as it is not made in the case of becoming air and the rest The *karma*, which had to yield fruit, *yāgas* and the rest, has been expended by enjoyment in the heaven-world, and what has yet to yield fruit is referred to further on in the *upanishad* And between these two stages there is no *karma*, the fruit of which has to be experienced Hence, the expression 'are born' in the text should not be taken literally What has been stated is confirmed by the last sentence

in the text The descending *jiva* does not become the person that takes food or has sexual intercourse He is merely in contact with him It is only after reaching a woman's womb that a body is attained

53 It was stated in the preceding para that escape from the last stages is more difficult When the corn, with which the descending *jiva* is in contact, is cut, the *jiva* who ensouled the corn-plant departs, but not so the descending *jiva*, whose contact with it continues, while the corn is cut, gathered, dried, put into a granary, husked, cooked, and eaten Having got into a man, he attaches himself to his semen Even then, he may not reach a woman's womb, for the husband may have no sexual appetite, or the woman may be barren, or her menstrual period may have passed He must manage to be eaten again by a man with his food When he gets into a womb at last, he is enveloped by a thin membrane known as the amnion When the time for coming into the world arrives, he has to squeeze himself and get out through a narrow opening

54 What is the kind of body that the descending *jiva* attains This is stated

Those that return here if they have good *karma*, reach good births—birth as a *brāhmana* as a *kshatriya* or as a *vaśya* those that return here if they have bad *karma*, reach evil births—birth as a dog as a hog, or as an out caste (*chūndo*, V-10 7)

This text should be understood in a general way. If the *karma* be evil a person may be born as a beast. If he be born a man he may be born into a family, that does not acknowledge the authority of the *veda*. Even if the family does so, it may misinterpret its texts, and hold the view that *Brahma* suffers from *avidyā*. Birth into a family, which clearly perceives the truth and endeavours to reach the highest goal is very rare.

55 Hitherto we considered the case of persons who have done meritorious deeds. What becomes of men of evil deeds? The *veda* states

These petty creatures that continually return do not go on either path, they die only to be re born immediately (*chūndo* V 10 8)

Reference is made to the path known as *devayāna* by which those that meditate on *Brahma* journey to the highest heaven, and to the path described in para 50, and known as

*pitṛiyāna* The petty creatures do not journey on the *devayāna*, for they have not meditated on *Brahma*, they do not go on the *pitṛiyāna*, as they have not done meritorious deeds They therefore return to earth life quickly In their case entry into a womb is unnecessary They come into existence from shoots or from sweat

56 The *jīva*, being born as stated in para 54, goes through the same experiences, births being followed by deaths, and deaths being followed by births How was this cycle of births and deaths caused? *Reply* The cause is *karma*, which connects the *jīva* with a body made of matter with the three *gunas*, and this connection leads to the experiencing of welcome and unwelcome fruits This is stated

As a bull or horse is yoked to a cart in the very same way this *jīva* is yoked to this body (*chāndo* VIII 12 3), one that is in a body, is caught by welcome and unwelcome things, from one in a body welcome and unwelcome things do not depart, and one that is without a body they do not touch (*Ibid* VIII 12 1)

The *jīva* is without a body by nature How is the condition, in which he abides in a body, brought about? The first text replies The



bull or horse is yoked to the cart with cords, the *jiva* is yoked to the body with *karma*. Why does one do *karma*—i.e., good and bad deeds? This is stated

By (previous) good deed one becomes the doer of good deeds, by (previous) evil deed one becomes the doer of evil deeds (*Bṛihad VI-4 5*)

*Karma* not only yields its fruit in the form of pleasure or pain but it also creates a tendency to repeat the *karma*. The tendency is known as *vāsanā*. It creates a desire and desire leads to *karma* again. When a person dies, he carries with him the tendencies formed and developed in the life that has ended, and when he is reborn, they appear and create desires and through them lead to fresh *karma*. Thus *karman* form a stream, in which one *karma* is followed by another, and this stream flows on without driving up. And it has had no beginning for one *karma* is preceded by another, this by another, and so on *ad infinitum*. Now in this cycle of births and deaths, what is it that makes one put up with it. The reply may be given that it is enjoyment of pleasure. But this pleasure is petty,

it is short-lived, it is procured with effort; it is mixed with pain, while it is experienced, it leads to future pain, and it obstructs the enjoyment of pleasure that is free from these defects. The *veda*, therefore, after describing the *jīva*'s journey to the heaven-world, thus concludes

Let one be disgusted (with *samsārā*) (*chāndo*,  
V-10 8)

## SECTION VI

### BRAHMA

57. Lastly as to *Brahma* There are five attributes, without which a conception of *Brahma* cannot be formed They are (i) being unchanging, (ii) being *jñāna*, (iii) being without limitations, (iv) being bliss, and (v) being free from imperfections. These are stated:

Unchanging shining (*jñāna*) and without limitations is *Brahma* (ana I 1), He perceived '*Brahma* is bliss' (*bhrigu*, VI), It is that well known *Akshara*, *Gargi*! whom those knowing *Brahma* describe as neither gross nor subtle as neither short nor long, as neither red (like fire), nor cohesive (like water) as being without shadow and without darkness, as being neither air nor ether, as being without attachments without taste or smell without eyes or ears, without speech or mind, without light without *prāṇa*, without a mouth, without limitations, and without a place within or without not pervaded by Him (*brāhad* V-8-7)

(i) In the first text there are three terms that denote *Brahma* as possessing three attributes. The first term 'unchanging' (*atyam*) connotes unchangeability, and differentiates *Brahma* from matter, which continually undergoes changes in its substance, and from bound *jivas*, who undergo changes in their attribute *jñāna*. See end of para 35 *supra*.

(ii) The second term covers both the *svarūpa* (substance) of *Brahma* and His attribute *jñāna*, and both are *jñāna*, i.e., they show themselves and other things, the *svarūpa* showing itself and the attribute other things. The term shows also that *Brahma* possesses *jñāna* as an attribute, that has never suffered any change. It therefore differentiates *Brahma* from the freed *jivas*, whose *jñāna* had contracted before.

(iii) The third word denies of *Brahma* limitations of every kind. Three kinds of limitations are observed in the world—limitation in place, limitation in time, and limitation in objects (*vastus*). A thing is limited in place, if it exists in one place, and not in other places. It is limited in time, if it exists at one time, and disappears at other times. It is limited in objects, if it cannot be identified with other

objects *Brahma* is everywhere, He exists at all times, and can be identified with all objects, for as stated in paras 14 to 17, He is in every object as its *ātmā*, and every word denotes Him in its primary sense. The absence of the last limitation may be understood also as denying the existence of any object, that excels Him in any good quality. This will be to deny that there is any being equal or superior to Him.

(iv) The second text shows that *Brahma* is bliss, i.e., that He is most agreeable. This is stated in another text also

He is bliss, for on reaching this bliss one becomes blissful (*Āna*, VII 1)

This means that by the enjoyment of *Brahma* one attains bliss.

(v) The last text shows *Brahma* in a feature, that is the reverse of the features found in the universe consisting of matter and *jivas*. It is not found in the freed *jiva*, who though without imperfections in himself was fit to be connected with them. These five attributes differentiate *Brahma* from everything else, and show Him to be a unique Being. They are known as *svarūpa nīrupaka dharmas*

(attributes that describe the *svarūpa* of *Brahma*)

58 This freedom of *Brahma* from all imperfections is shown in other texts also

Him night and day do not touch no old age, no death, no grief, no good deeds, no evil deeds, all evil depart from Him (*chūndo*, VIII 4 1). He is free from *karma* (*pāpma*) free from old age, death, grief, hunger and thirst (*Ibid*, VIII 1 5), He has risen from all evil (*p pma*) He will rise from all evil, who thus meditates on Him (*Ibid*, I 6-7)

The first text shows that the term *pāpma* occurring in the second and third texts should be understood as covering both good and bad deeds. The expression 'risen from all evil' cannot be understood in its primary sense. As *Brahma* is omnipresent, to think of His rising from a place connected with evil is absurd. It must therefore mean 'untouched by all evil,' as stated in the first text. Hence, though He does actions that in others may be regarded as good or evil, their fruits do not touch him. Hence it is that one that meditates on Him as possessing this attribute is released from all evil. A prisoner in chains cannot release fellow-prisoners. As no mention is made of

any means, by which He attained this condition, we may conclude that it pertains to His nature

59 On this point some doubts may be entertained

(1) *Brahma* is said to be present in the heart of every person, He must therefore, like the *jiva*, who also dwells within the heart, experience pleasure and pain *Reply* Mere dwelling within a body does not bring about this result, the true cause is bondage to *karma*, and this does not exist in *Brahma*, for it is said

Two birds inseparable and possessing similar qualities, cling to the same tree, of them one eats the ripe fruit, the other does not eat but shines on all sides (*munda*, III-1-1)

In this verse the two birds are a *jiva* and *Brahma*. They are inseparable, as the *jiva* is the aspect in which *Brahma* appears. The *jiva* possesses along with *Brahma* the eight qualities stated in the *chandogya*, chapter VIII, section 1, but they are now prevented by *karma* from appearing, when he becomes free, they will emerge. The tree is the body, which is fit to be cut down like a tree. The one that eats is

the *jiva*, and the ripe fruit is the fruit of *karma*. The other is *Brahma*. Between Him and the *jiva* there is a difference. The former abides within every object of His own will for the purpose of control, while the *jiva* has no choice, and must enter the body, that has been made for him, and must experience the fruit of his past *karma*.

60 (11) The *jiva*'s body being made up of bones, flesh and blood, connection with it must be undesirable. The fact that *Brahma* enters it of His own will cannot alter the nature of things. He must be subject to imperfections by his stay within the body. *Reply* It is not true that even matter in itself is undesirable. The same object causes pleasure at one time, and pain at another time, it is pleasurable to one person, and is painful to another. If this effect were due to the nature of the object, then every object must cause either pleasure or pain at all times and to all persons. But this is not one's experience. It must therefore be concluded that *Brahma* causes an object to appear pleasurable or otherwise according to the *karma* of each individual. But He is subject to no control, and the



connection with matter, which in the case of the *jiva* produces undesirable results, only helps Him to control an object as may be necessary in its case, and derive amusement

61. (iii) It has been said that *Brahma* entered everything and gave it a name and a form, and that He is the *atmā* of that thing. He has therefore a body—divine, human or otherwise and a name, and like the *jiva* He is subject to *vedic* injunctions and prohibitions. In other words He is subject to *karma*. Reply Though *Brahma* has entered every body, and has thus become connected with various forms, yet He is like one without them, *i e.*, without the effect produced by the connection. He does not therefore share with the *jiva* subjection to *karma*. This is stated

Ether (*ākāśa*) is the maker of name and form, because He is between them, He is *Brahma* (*chāndo*, VIII-14-1)

In this text the term *ākāśa* denotes *Brahma*. He is between them, *i e.*, He is untouched by the effects, which they produce. He is merely their maker

62 Because *Brahma* is not touched by the imperfections of the various places, in which

He abides, a comparison is made in the sacred books between Him and the sun reflected in water mirrors and the like. As the sun's purity is not thereby affected, so the purity of *Brahma* remains unaffected. He is also compared to ether (*ākāśa*) in the text—

He is subtle and unpolluted as the ether  
(*chāndo*, III-14-2)

Ether fills vessels of various sizes—some small, others large, but it is not affected by their size. The sun, on the other hand, does not enter sheets of water, but appears to be within them, and though his reflections are large or small, the sun himself remains the same. Similarly *Brahma*, though abiding in intelligent beings and in non-intelligent objects, is not affected by their imperfections, but ever remains the same. An element, that is common to both the examples, should be found, and this is being untouched by the imperfection of the objects, in which the ether is, or the sun appears to be, and it is this that is affirmed of *Brahma*. One is affected by the imperfections of a thing by nearness in place, nearness in time and nearness in nature. The sun and sheets of water illustrate distance in

place, the ether and jars illustrate distance in nature, and in making the comparisons the intention is to show that distance in the nature of objects is as good a reason as distance in place for the freedom of *Brahma* from the imperfections of the objects

63 *Brahma* is not only free from imperfections of all kinds, but is also the seat of all noble qualities This is stated

They say He is *samyadātma*, for all good qualities come together in Him All good qualities come together in him who thus meditates (*chāndo*, IV 15-2)

And there is no limit to the excellence of each quality To show this, the *anandavallī-upanishad* takes one quality, bliss (*ānanda*) as a sample, and gives the following description It takes as the unit the happiness of one in every way well-placed in the world, and states that the happiness of each grade of beings is one hundred times the happiness of the next lower grade These grades are beginning with man—(1) human beings, who have become *gandharvas*, remaining men, (2) *gandharvas* living in the intermediate world, (3) departed men living in a world continuing

for a considerable period of time, (iv) *devas* born in the heaven-world, (v) those that have become *devas* by *karma*, i.e., *yāga*, (vi) *devas-vasus*, *rudras* and the rest, thirty-three in number, who receive the offerings in *yāgas*, (vii) *Indra*, (viii) *Bṛhaspati*, and (ix) *Prajāpati*, the creative agent. One hundred times the happiness of the last is the bliss of *Brahma*. The object of this description is merely to show that the bliss of *Brahma* excels the happiness of every one else, and it is immediately added

One that meditates on the bliss of *Brahma*,  
from which speech returns with the mind  
without reaching (its higher limit) does not  
fear anything (*āna*, IX)

64 On this subject also there are some doubts (i) There is a text, that states *Brahma* to be *nirguṇa*—i.e., without qualities. Does this refer to all qualities, or only to some qualities. Here is another text

He is *ātman*, He is free from *karma*, He is  
free from old age, death, grief, hunger and  
thirst, He has unchanging objects of  
desire, and His will is never frustrated  
(*chāndo*, VIII-1 5)

Here two good qualities being stated, the term *guṇa* cannot refer to all qualities, and as six

bad qualities are denied, the term should refer to bad qualities in general. This conclusion follows the rule deduced in the *pūrva mīmāṃsā*. There is a direction, 'Do the *yāga* with a *pasu*', and there is the direction to the *hotā* (one of the helpers in a sacrifice) to recite the appropriate *mantra* for the offering of the *vapa* of the *chāga* (goat). *Pasu* is a general term, meaning any four-footed animal, and the term *chāga* is a particular term. The general term *pasu* therefore refers to the goat (VI-8-9).

65 (ii) *Brahma* is defined to be *satya* (unchanging), *jñāna* (shining) and *ananta* (without limitations). Being *jñāna*, can He possess *jñāna* as an attribute? *Reply* The text states *Brahma* to be *jñāna* in His *svarupa*. It states so much only, but does not deny the possession of attributes affirmed by other texts. We accept *Brahma* to be *jñāna* in order that the text quoted may not become meaningless, and the same argument compels the acceptance of the existence of other attributes also in *Brahma*, such as omniscience, omnipotence, etc.

66 (iii) The third *brāhmaṇa* of chapter IV of the *bṛihad aranyaka* begins with the words 'There are two forms of *Brahma*'. It then

describes the whole universe consisting of the gross and the subtle as His form, it states a particular colour for Him and concludes with the teaching 'not so, not so, for there is no other than that' Here all the forms of *Brahma* described are referred to by the word *iti* (so), and they are denied Is it not so? *Reply* After stating certain things as the attributes of *Brahma*, things that are not known by other means as His attributes, will the *upanishad* deny the very same as attributes? Among the things mentioned some are no doubt known by other means, but their being attributes of *Brahma* was never known Other things are not known either in their *svarūpa* or in their connection with Him The statement is not therefore a repetition of what was previously known, and their denial is inappropriate The text must therefore be understood as denying that *Brahma* is merely what has been stated Certain attributes of Him were stated The text says 'Do not think that He is merely as described' A limitation is implied by the foregoing description, and this is referred to by the word *iti* (so) and is denied Further after the denial certain other attributes of

*Brahma* are stated Hence the expression 'not so' must mean 'Not merely this'

67 Hence *Brahma* is free from all imperfections, and is the seat of all noble qualities This is known as *ubhaya lingam* (two-fold marks) Of these qualities six are known as *shāḍguṇya*. They are *jñāna*, *bala*, *aśvarya*, *virya*, *śakti* and *tejas* *Jñāna* is the capacity to know, *bala* is the capacity to support, *aśvarya* is the capacity to control, *virya* is freedom from fatigue by knowing, supporting or controlling, *śakti* is the capacity to do what others cannot, and *tejas* is the power to overcome others, and not being overcome by them These six qualities are found in full measure in *Brahma* For He can see all things at the same moment by sense perception, and He has this power, not as a gift from another He supports the whole world and controls it To Him this is mere play and causes no fatigue His *śakti* and *tejas* are unquestioned Here is the authority for these statements.

- (1) His capacity is heard to be superior, to be of many kinds and to pertain to His nature, so also His power to know, to support and to create and destroy (*Śvetā*, VI-8), (ii) He knows everything and every

attribute of every thing (*mujja*, I-1-10), (iii) By the unobstructed command of that *Alakara*, Gargi! the sun and the moon stand supported (*brhad*, V-6 2), (iv) He has everyone in His grip, He controls everyone, He is the lord of everyone (*brhad*, VI-4 22), (v) The highest *Brahma* is an all pervading *puruṣa* free from any change, blue mixed with yellow, with very superior *urva*, with dissimilar eyes. Prostration before this Being who appears in every form (*ndr*, *anu*, 12), (vi) *Vishṇu* the protector, who cannot be injured by any one, walked three steps, by that means He made the steady performance of *dharma* possible (*sūma*, *eda* *uttarā* *grantha*, 18-2)

The possession of *jñāna* is shown by the second text, of *bala* by the first text; of *aistvarya* by the fourth text, and of *saṁti* by the first text, which shows also that these qualities belong to *Brahma* by nature. The fifth text shows that His *urva* is very superior. The original has the term *ūrdhva* *retam*, which the commentary explains as shown in the translation. The possession of *tejas* is indicated by the sixth text, which has the term *adabhya*, which means one that is incapable of being injured by any one, and this is *tejas*. The *viṣṇu purāṇa* very clearly states the possession of the six qualities.



The word *bhagavān* connotes one that has in full measure the six qualities—*jñāna*, *śakti*, *bala*, *aīśvarya*, *virya* and *tejas*, without undesirable qualities. Thus, the noble word *bhagavān* denotes *Vāsudeva*, the highest *Brahma*, it does not denote any one else. This word both by its etymology and by well-established usage denotes Him in its primary sense, others indeed are denoted by it in a secondary sense (VI-5-76 77 and 79)

The words 'without undesirable qualities' express the meaning of the last syllable *an* in the word *bhagavān*, *an* is *na*, the particle denoting negation. This word is said to be noble, as it conveys this great truth

68 If *Brahma* had these qualities only, we should be afraid to approach Him, for He rewards or punishes according to the *karma* of each. This means that for good deeds the doer is rewarded, if it be a small deed, the reward is little, if it be a great deed, the reward is large. For bad deeds the doer is punished. The punishment is little, if the deed be a small one, and it is large, if the deed be great. We have disobeyed Him in numberless lives, identifying ourselves with our bodies, and not even recognising His existence. We have thus made

ourselves liable to very heavy punishment *Brahma* possesses another set of qualities, that gives us courage. Of these the foremost is mercy (*dayā*, *kṛpā*, or *karuṇā*). *Brahma* is unable to see us suffer. During cosmic rest (*pralaya*) the *jīvas* have no bodies or senses, and as their attribute *jñāna* works through the senses, they are unconscious, and are like matter. Pitying this condition of the *jīvas*, He creates the world and gives them bodies and senses, and with them the power to utilise them. Through the four faced Being and great *rishis* He spreads the knowledge of the teaching contained in the *veda* in the world, so that the *jīvas* may adopt the means by which He may be reached. When this teaching happens to be forgotten by lapse of time, He comes down into the world and renews it. This will be evident from the following quotation from the *bhagavad gītā*

This imperishable *yoga* I taught to *Vivasvan*,  
*Vivasvan* to *Manu*, *Manu* to *Ikshvāku*.  
 Thus handed down along the line of  
 teachers the king sages knew this *yoga*  
 but by great efflux of time this *yoga* has  
 been lost to the world. What I have taught  
 you now is that ancient *yoga* (IV-1, 2  
 and 3)

The *yoga* referred to is *karma yoga*, and it is said to be imperishable, as it never fails to yield its fruit. It has been lost owing to the inability of those that received the instruction from time to time. Next, if a person meditates on *Brahma* with love, when the meditation has become continuous and vivid, He cancels the meditator's past *karmas*. This means that He wills not to give him their fruits. This is stated

As the cotton of the *ishika* plant thrown into a fire is burnt up in the same way all his *karmas* are burnt up (*chāndo*, V-24 3)

This is a very merciful dispensation. If a *jīva* had to expend his *karmas* by the experiencing of their fruits he could never be released from them. For the experiencing of the fruits the taking up of a body is needed and in that body fresh *karmas* are done from the tendencies (*vāsanā*), which have been formed. Nor can the *karmas* be expended by experiencing their fruits for the time to come will not be sufficient for the purpose. To cancel *karmas* by penance (*prāyaschitta*) is equally impossible, as the doing of fresh *karmas* cannot be avoided, while the penance is being done.

69 In these ways *Brahma* shows His mercy. This is common to all *jivas*, for being the ruler of the worlds He must be impartial. He does not therefore interfere with particular individuals, but watches for an excuse for doing so. This excuse is afforded, when a good deed is done without the doer's knowing it, or without his intending to do it, though he is aware that it must happen. Thus, when a person irrigates his rice field, if a *tulasi* plant happens to receive the water, *Brahma* counts it as a good deed though the person is not aware of the existence of the *tulasi* plant. If he be aware of its existence he may not intend that it should be irrigated, though he knows that this must happen. In the former case the good deed is known as *yādricchika*, and in the latter as *prāsangika*.

70 Another quality of *Brahma* is love (*vātsalya*). He loves all *jivas* for it is said

He is the goal of all and the well wisher of all (*śveta*, III)

This means. Because He loves all, He is a fruit that should be reached. He shows His love in several ways. If one wishes to be ever

with Him, and meditates on Him, He himself helps the meditator. This is stated

To those that wish to be ever with Me, and meditate on Me, I give with love that *buddhi*, with which they will reach Me To favour them, I remain as the subject of their thought and with the bright lamp of knowledge, I destroy the darkness born of past *karma* (*bhagavad gita*, X-10 and 11)

The *buddhi* referred to is seeing *Brahma* vividly as by sense perception The bright lamp of knowledge is knowledge of *Brahma* and of His noble qualities The darkness that is destroyed by this is yearning towards sense objects This was no doubt destroyed before meditation was begun, but something of it remains in a subtle form, and this is now destroyed Next, when a person, who loves Him for Himself, is injured by another He cannot bear to see it He, of His own motion and without an appeal from the beloved, interferes and punishes the offender. This was seen in the case of *Prahlada* His father, *Hiranyakasipu* tried to kill the son in various ways, but *Prahlada* bore them all, and never breathed a word of complaint. Yet *Brahma*, unable to see His

beloved suffer, appeared in the form of half-man and half-lion and killed *Hiranyakasipu*. One may see this in the world. A cultivator out of love for the crops that he grows pulls up the weeds, that impede their growth. Next, when those that love Him become conceited, He corrects them. This is stated in the *kena upanishad*.

The *devas* overcame the *asuras* with the help of *Brahma*, but becoming conceited, they thought 'This victory is due to ourselves'. Knowing this, *Brahma* appeared before them in the form of an *yaksha*. They did not know 'Who is this *yaksha*'. They said to *Agni*, '*yūta-vedah!* Find out who this *yaksha* is'. He agreed, and going up to Him, asked 'Who art thou? The *yaksha* replied 'I am *agni*, I am *yūta-vedas*'. He asked *Agni* 'What is your *śakti*? *Agni* replied 'I can burn all that is on earth'. The *yaksha* placed a piece of straw before him and said 'Burn this'. *Agni* approached it with all speed, but was not able to burn it. He returned from the *yaksha*, and informed the *de as* 'I was unable to know who the *yaksha* is'. Then the *de as* said to *Vāyu*, '*Vāyu!* Find out who this *yaksha* is'. He agreed and going up to the *yaksha*, asked 'Who art thou? The *yaksha* replied 'I am *vāyu*, I am *mātariśvan*'. He asked *Vāyu* 'What is your *śakti*? *Vāyu* replied 'I can carry

away all that is on earth' The *yaksha* placed a piece of straw before him, and said 'carry this away' *Vāyu* approached it with all speed, but was not able to carry it away *Vāyu* returned from the *yaksha*, and informed the *devas* 'I was unable to know who this *yaksha* is' Then the *devas* said to *Indra* 'Maghavan find out who this *yaksha* is' He agreed, and approached the *yaksha*, who went out of his sight Just then *Umā*, the daughter of *Himavān*, appeared shining with many ornaments *Indra* went to her and asked 'Who is this *yaksha*' She replied 'He is *Brahma*, this victory having come through *Brahma*, you receive respect From this teaching *Indra* knew that the *yaksha* was *Brahma* (3 and 4)

Readers of *Śrī Bhāgavatam* know how in the *avatāra* as *Śrī Kṛishna*, *Brahma* took the conceit out of *Indra*, by persuading the shepherds not to make the annual offering to *Indra*, but to make it to the *govardhana* hill, how *Indra* incensed at this, sent heavy and continuous rain for seven days, and how *Śrī Kṛishna* protected them from the rain by holding the *govardhana* hill over them *Brahma* shows His love in still another way. When one, that loves Him, is guilty of a misdeed, and He has to punish him, the punishment is light For an offence that deserves

the cutting off of his head with a sword, He scratches him with a thorn. This may be seen in the world also. A mother merely chides her son for an offence, which she will not tolerate in another. *Brahma* loves like the mother; but the mother's love is limited to one life, the love of *Brahma* has no such limitation.

71. A third quality of *Brahma* is accessibility (*saulabhya*). In His *svarûpa* He cannot be reached by *jivas*. For their sake He appears in a very beautiful form in the place known as the highest heaven. This benefit is reaped by the *jivas* that have become free, and by the *jivas*, that were never bound by *karma* and that are known as *nityas*. For the sake of the *devas* He appears in the middle of the milk ocean, for the sake of the *yogis* (those that meditate on Him) He appears in the sun's orb. Even this is not to His satisfaction; he comes and abides in the heart of every man and every woman. This is stated •

The lord of all *prajās* (beings) greater than the great, dwells in the shoreless ocean, in the middle of the world, over *nāka* (the place of unalloyed bliss), and within the heart of men. He has entered the



luminous object with His light (*nārā*, I-1), (ii) Now, that golden *Purusha*, who is seen within the sun, with golden beard, with golden hair, and golden in every part of the body up to the tip of his nails His eyes are like the lotus flower newly-opened to the sun's rays (*chāndo*, I-6 6 and 7), (iii) *Purusha*, the controller of the past and the future, dwells in the middle of the meditator's body in a form of the size of the thumb Hence He does not shrink (from the faults of the body) (*kaṭha*, IV-12)

The first verse refers to all the places stated *Nāka* is the highest heaven, it is so called, as there is pure bliss (*kam*) in it The shoreless ocean is the milk ocean, to which reference is made in the *purāṇas* The middle of the world is the intermediate world, in which the sun moves about, reference is made to the sun's orb This is clear from the second text His being present in the heart of every person is stated clearly in the third text It is added that He does not shrink from the body, which is made up of bones, flesh and blood and covered with a soft skin to conceal its ugliness He is like a father, who plunges into a sewage pit, into which a dear child has fallen The highest degree of accessibility is

shown, when he responds to the call of earnest souls, and is present in images made by them in a form of the same size as the images. This appears from the following verse of the *bhagavad gītā*

In whatever form men wish to see Me, in the  
same form do I appear before them  
(IV-11)

72 The fourth quality of *Brahma* is the quality of mixing intimately with inferior beings, as if He were one of them. This is known as *sausilya*, and can evidently be exhibited only in *avatāras*. It was shown when as *Śrī Rāma* He dwelt with monkeys and *rākshasas*, and when as *Śrī Kṛishna* He played with shepherd boys and girls.

73 One more quality of *Brahma* is generosity. As stated in the text 'He is bliss, for on reaching this bliss, one becomes blissful. He alone makes one blissful' (*āna*, VII-1), He confers on freed *jīvas* the bliss of enjoying Himself and His noble qualities. There can be no higher gift than this, and the persons that receive this gift, for numberless world ages did not recognise His very existence, and ran after very inferior

pleasures, and the means by which they now reach Him is not commensurate with the greatness of the gift. Yet He does not mind these. This generosity is known as *gāmbhīrya*, the quality of not minding the unfitness of the person that receives a gift, and the greatness of the gift itself. Even after He gives himself and His possessions to those that love Him, he feels that He is a debtor. This quality is known as *audārya*.

74 When it is known that *Brahma* possesses the qualities described in paras 68 to 73, one will approach Him with boldness. He will do so with great eagerness, when He knows that He is the lord of both the worlds (*ubhaya vibhūti nātha*). Of them one is this world of matter with the three *gunas*. It is known as *līlā vibhūti*, for it affords amusement to *Brahma* by its evolution, continued existence and dissolution. The other is known as *nitya vibhūti*. Its existence is shown by the following text

Now, that Fire which shines beyond this heaven, above this universe, in worlds without a superior world (*chāndo*, III-13-7)

The original has two expressions meaning 'above all' (*sarva*) and 'above all' (*visva*).

The term *viśva* being used in another place to denote the world of diversity, the term *sarva* should be taken to denote the great elements, that surround it on all sides. The two expressions therefore denote this world of matter with the three *guṇas*. This interpretation is confirmed by the expression 'in worlds without a superior world' it can apply to the highest heaven only and the fire that dwells therein is the highest *Ātmā*. This world is known as *mitya vibhuti*, as it does not undergo changes brought about by time. Here a flower quickly fades, and a fruit soon becomes rotten. In the other world objects remain as they are, unless the highest *Ātmā* or one of the dwellers therein wills otherwise. This appears from the following text

All beings form one of His feet the immortal  
three feet are in heaven (*chāndo*, III 12 6)

The term 'beings' refers to *jīvas* dwelling in this world in material vehicles. The 'three feet' are objects of enjoyment, places of enjoyment and instruments of enjoyment. These are immortal : *e*, not subject to change. The matter of that world shows itself, and is therefore said to be *jñāna*. We are not able to

see it owing to our *karma*, as we are unable to see the *jivas* around us in spite of their being *jñāna*. The matter conduces to pure bliss, for the world is denoted on this account by the word *nākam*, *ka* means bliss, *a* is the reverse, and *nākam* means a place in which *a* is not found. This matter has *satva* as its only quality, and it is therefore said to be *suddha satva*. In this world the *satva* quality is mixed with *rajas* and *tamas*, and as stated in para 22 *supra* the matter gives rise to desire and hate, and to the attendant feelings—anger, fear and unwillingness to part with property. It also brings about misperception, sloth and sleep. In the other world, the matter being marked by *satva* alone, the dwellers therein see things as they are, and enjoy bliss without the admixture of undesirable elements. This is stated

Wise men ever perceive that highest place of *Vishnu*, as the eye moving in the sky sees clearly (owing to the absence of obstacles).  
 Wise men brighten that highest place of *Vishnu*, praising and never going to sleep  
 (*sīma veda, uttarā grāṇtha*, 18.2)

The *kaushītaki upanishad*, in describing the journey of the freed *jiva* to the highest heaven,

refers to a tank named *ara*, to a tree named *tilya*, to a city named *aparājita*, and to a palace named *vibhu pramita*. We may take these to represent other things also. *Śrī Bhāṣyakāra* in the *vaikuntha gadya* accordingly refers to gardens in that world, in which flowers with various colours and smells have fallen all around on the ground, are falling or remain on the trees, to pleasure—hillocks, which, though ever enjoyed, yet create wonder as if they were new, to places filled with parrots, *sārikas*, peacocks, nightingales and other birds with sweet sounds, to tanks with pure, sweet water and with flights of steps paved with precious stones, pearls and coral, to pleasure grounds that fill with delight those that enter them with numberless objects of pleasure, to beds made here and there of flowers, to swarms of bees elated with the drinking of honey drops from various flowers, and humming sweetly, and to gentle breezes laden with the fine smell of sandal, *agaru*, *karpūre* and flowers. There can be no comparison between the two worlds. This one is full of suffering, that other is full of bliss.

75 The *svarūpa* of *Brahma*, His qualities and the *nitya vibhūti* have been described. He

appears in the highest heaven in a very beautiful figure for the enjoyment of those that serve Him there This is stated

- (i) I know this, viz meditating here on that great *Purusha* alone who shines like the sun and who is far removed from *tamas*, one becomes immortal (*eveta*), (ii) All moments came forth from the *Purusha* with the brilliance of lightning (*nāra* 1-8)

These texts show that *Brahma* has a figure, if it were not so, the reference to shining and brilliance would be meaningless The first text shows also that the figure is not made of matter of this world for it is in a place, which is removed from *tamas* or subtle matter It is made of *suddha satva*, the matter of the *nitya vibhūti* It therefore shines like the sun, and has the brilliance of lightning Its beauty (beauty of the parts and beauty of the whole), its smell and its softness are *par excellence* It is ever young, that is, it never becomes old See the text

He has a brilliant figure, all desirable smells and tastes are found in Him (*chāndo*, III-14 2)

This text may be taken to represent the other particulars about His figure This is

known as *para rūpa*, and *Brahma* in this figure is known as *Vāsudeva*. A second variety of figures is known as *vyūha*. There are three *vyūhas*—*Saṅkarshana*, *Pradyumna* and *Anuruddha*, and though they possess all the six qualities beginning with *jñāna*, each exhibits two qualities in particular, the first exhibits *jñāna* and *bala*, the second *aśtarya* and *virya*, and the third *śakti* and *tejas*. The function of the first is to destroy the world in the end, of the second to create it, and of the third to sustain it. This division into three forms, and the division of qualities and functions are stated in the *pāṇcharātra āgama*, of which the author is *Narāyaṇa* Himself. Reference is made to the *vyūha* figures in the following text

The *devas* meditated on the highest *Ātmā* appearing in three forms, praised by those that praise and enjoyable like cow's ghee. Of them *Indra* meditated on one figure, the sun on another figure, the others meditated on the third figure, figures that had come forth from *Vāsudeva* and are enjoyable like *śadha* (*nāra*, 10 18)

The commentator explains that the three figures are the three *vyūhas*. The third variety



consists of the figures in which the highest *Ātmā* appears from time to time for the helping of the world. Reference is made to two of these in the following texts

- (I) You have been raised (from the ocean) by *Kṛishna* in the form of a boar with a hundred hands (*nārā* I 28) (II) See the actions of *Vishnu* by which house holders have been enabled to do their *agnihotra* *Vishnu* the chief friend of *Indra* (*sama veda uttarā grantha* 18 2)

The first text refers to the raising of land after submergences in the ocean. This was effected by the highest *Ātmā* in the form of a boar (*varāha*). The second text refers to the *avatāra* as *vāmana* in which the highest *Ātmā* appeared before *Bali* king of the *asuras* in the form of a dwarf and begged for so much land as could be measured by him in three steps. This being granted, He measured the whole of the earth as one step the heaven as the second and *Bali's* head as the third. These *avatāras* are fully described in the *purāṇas*. Indications of other *vibhava avatāras* may be found if the *veda* be carefully examined. The next variety consists of the forms in which the highest *Ātmā* appears in the hearts of men

This is shown by the texts quoted in para 71. The heart of man being of the size of his thumb, the figure of the highest *Ātmā* is said to be of the same size. The *taittirīya* explains how He abides in the heart. It refers to the heart and to a large fire in its middle, which by the description given appears to be the fire in the stomach (*jāthara agni*), and then states

In the middle of it there is a light, that is subtle with its top pointing upwards. It shines like a streak of lightning with a blue rain cloud in its middle, it is thin like the end of the *nivāra* (a kind of grain), is of yellow colour and is peerless. In the middle of this light the highest *Ātmā* abides (*narū, anu* II)

The last variety consists of the forms in which He appears in *images* at the request of those that love Him. The first variety is known as *para*, the second as *vyuha*, the third as *vishava*, the fourth as *hārda*, and the last as *archā*. All the varieties other than the first are made by taking a little from the *para rūpa* and they are therefore different from bodies made of the matter of this world.

76 Now, who is the highest *Ātmā* described in the preceding paras? The *veda* uses general terms like *sat*, *ānandamaya*, *ākāśa*,

*prāṇa*, *jyotiḥ*, *brahma*, *akṣara*, *vaisvānara*, *ātmā* and the like *Sat* means that the existence of which is known from a source of knowledge, *ānandamaya* is one full of *ānanda* or bliss, *ākāśa* is what shines or makes others shine, *prāṇa* is what makes one breathe, *jyotiḥ* is fire or light, *brahma* is what is great in its substance or in its attributes, *akṣara* is what is imperishable, *vaisvānara* is one that leads all, and *ātmā* is one that pervades a thing and controls it. The particular being, that is described by these terms, should be ascertained. The eleventh *anuvāka* of *nārāyaṇa* has for its special purpose the teaching as to who is the highest *Ātmā*, and it should be followed in understanding other *vedic* texts. In the *purva mīmāṃsā* there is the injunction—‘He makes the offering with a *juhū*’. It only mentions the instrument for making the offering but not the wood of which it should be made. This is done by another text ‘He whose *juhū* is made of *parvā* wood,’ and the first text is understood with reference to the second. Similarly, certain texts mention various *devatās* as objects to be meditated on, and this is their only purpose. Who these

*devatās* are must be ascertained from the texts, which have no purpose other than to determine the nature of those *devatās*, and it is the *anuvāka* referred to, and it shows that these *devatās* are *Narāyana*, who is their *atma*. He it is that should be meditated on in the form of those *devatās*. The texts are

The being stated to be the highest *Brahma* is *Nārāyaṇa*, the highest *tatva* is *Narāyaṇa*, the highest *gotra* (fire) is *Nārāyaṇa*

See the following text from the *mahopani-  
shad*. It begins with the statement—‘*Nārāyaṇa*  
alone was, no *Brahma*, no *Īśāna*. It goes on to  
state that He found no pleasure in being alone,  
etc. The *subāla upanishad* begins with these  
words—

*Nārāyaṇa* is a dweller in the highest heaven, has a shining body, and is one i e, has no equal or superior The eye and what is to be seen are *Nārāyaṇa*, the ear and what is to be heard are *Nārāyaṇa*

It then goes on thus

He remains within (man's) body in the heart,  
He is unborn, one i.e., without an equal  
or superior, eternal, He whose body earth  
is, who moves about in earth, whom the  
earth does not know, whose body water is,  
. whose body *mrityu* (subtle matter)

is, who moves about in *mṛtyu*, whom *mṛtyu* does not know, He, the inner ruler of all beings is free from *karma*, dwells in the highest heaven, has a shining body, has no equal or superior. He is *Nārāyaṇa*.

77 The highest *Ātmā* has thus been shown to be *Nārāyaṇa*. He does not govern the world alone. The Being known as *Śrī* or *Mahā Lakshmi* also controls the world with Him. Her existence is stated in the text

That one with *s adhā* breathed but without air,

The term *svadhā* is explained as denoting *Śrī* in the *viṣṇu purāṇa*, *Indra* addressing her observes—

Creator of the world, you are *siddhi* (fruit sought), you are *svadhā*, you are *śāhā*, you are *sudhā* (nectar) (I-9 119) (1)

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(1) The full text is—*mṛtyu* (death) did not exist, exemption from death was not. Knowledge of night or of day was not. That one with *svadhā* breathed, but without air, none whatever was other than He and greater than He (*ṛik veda*, *aṣṭaka* 8, *anu* II *sūkta* I). This describes the state of cosmic rest (*pralaya*). As all *jīvas* were without bodies there was no work for *mṛtyu* to do. The *devatā* in charge of death, and he therefore disappeared. This did not lead to exemption from death, for there was no embodied *jīva* then. There was no sun to divide time into day and

Further on she is stated to be the yielder of the fruit, viz., release from bondage (*Ibid*, 120) Another text of the *veda* states her to be the controller (*īśānā*) (1) of this world (*yajur*, *kānda*, IV-4) She is thus said to be the creator of the world, its controller and the yielder of *moksha*, and these are the functions of an all-Ruler Hence both *Narāyana* and *Śrī* form the highest *devatā* for us, as *Agni* and *Soma* together form a single *devatā* for an offering (para 6) As they are bound by mutual love, that can in no way be weakened, the disadvantages of divided control do not appear Each of them possesses all qualities,

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night What existed was *Brahma* with *svadhā* *Sūyana*, the commentator, takes the etymological meaning of the word *svadhā*, which is what is placed on oneself He understands that this is *māyā*, but as the theory that *Brahma* has *māyā*, i.e. *avidyā* is untenable this interpretation should be rejected We accept the derivation, and what is placed on *Brahma* is *Śrī*, for she dwells on His breast

(1) The full text is—may *Aditi*, the supporter of heaven the supporter of earth, the controller (*īśānā*) of this world, the wife of *Vishnu*, the pervader of the world, the yielder of food, the possessor of good *aisvarya* yield us happiness, who are on her lap (*yajur*, IV-4-12)

but by agreement between them, *Narāyaṇa* exhibits the qualities pertaining to a father, and *Śrī* exhibits the qualities pertaining to a mother. We, *jīvas*, exist to serve them both; we must appeal to both to release us; and we shall have to serve both, when we attain release. Neither is our *daivam* without the other.

78. We may conclude this section with a quotation from the *Śrī Bhāṣyam* comparing our relation to the highest *Ātmā* with the relation of a young prince to his father, emperor:

A young prince, intent on his play, gets out of the palace, loses his way, and is given up as lost by the king. Being of too tender an age to know his parentage, he is brought up by a good *brāhmana*, and is taught the *veda*. He is sixteen years old, is a fine-looking boy, and is full of all estimable qualities. If some good man tells him 'Your father is the lord of all the country, and is full of all estimable qualities, and lives in a great palace, anxious to see you, his long-lost son,' he is extremely pleased, and cries out 'My father lives, he is full of every kind of wealth.' The king too is equally pleased, and makes efforts to get his son back; and in due course they become re-united.

We are the sons of the highest *Ātmā*; like the prince intent on play, we are engrossed in

sensual enjoyment. As the prince gets out of the palace, we are outside the presence of our Father, and are not in the highest heaven. As he loses his way, we do not know the means, by which we may reach Him. Like the good *brāhmaṇa*, who brings up the prince, an *āchārya* comes, and teaches us the *veda*, and makes us qualified to receive instruction about the highest *Ātmā*. Like the good man revealing the prince's parentage, an *āchārya* tells us that we are not the bodies, for which we mistake ourselves, and that we are the servants of the highest *Ātmā*. If we have done good *karma*, we shall be pleased, and will long to go to Him. As the king is anxious to see his long lost son, so is our Father anxious to get us into the highest heaven. There is one point of difference. The king does not know where the prince was, our Father knows all about us, but being the ruler of all, and having on this account to be impartial, He awaits some effort on our part, and then finding an excuse, He helps us in the way pointed out in para 69, and we are in due course united to Him in the highest heaven.



## SECTION VII

### BRAHMA VIDYĀ

79. How are we to reach the highest *Ātmā*, we, who do not know ourselves, and are running after sense objects. The first thing to do is to go to a *guru* (teacher) What the *guru* will do is stated :

If a person's eyes be bandaged, and he be brought from the *gāndhāra* country, and left in a lonely place, he will turn to the east, or to the south, or will look down, and cry 'I have been brought with my eyes bandaged. I have been left here with my eyes bandaged.' If some good man removes the bandage and says 'The *gāndhāra* country is in this direction, go in this direction' the person will go from village to village, making enquiries, if he be clever and does not forget what he is told, and will reach the *gāndhāra* country eventually. Similarly one, that goes to a *guru*, will meditate (on the instruction imparted to him) (*chando*, VI-14-1 and 2).

Our eyes are bandaged ; we have wandered far from the highest *Ātmā*, and are plunged in

*samsara* The person described cries about his present condition, but we do not see how ignorant and miserable we are, and do not cry for help. As a good man takes off his bandage, our *guru*, if we go to him, will teach us what we are in our nature, will create a disgust for worldly objects, create a longing to reach the highest *Ātmā*, and will show us the way to reach Him.

80 The *veda* states the kind of *guru* to whom we should go

He should approach a teacher only who knows the *vedānta* and who sees *Brahma* in meditation taking fuel in his hands (*munḍa* I 2-12)

This is repeated in the *bhagavad gītā*

Obtain this *jñāna* by prostration by service, and by questioning. Those, that possess *jñāna*, and have had realisation of the *tatva*, will teach you *jñāna* (IV-34)

These texts show that *jñāna* should be obtained only from a *guru*, for this alone will be well impressed on the mind. This is also stated—One named *Satyakāma* went to a teacher for instruction. After ascertaining that he was a *brāhmaṇa*, the teacher did the *upanayana* ceremony, and sent him to a jungle with four

hundred lean and weak cows, with the direction that he should not return till the number had risen to a thousand. The disciple remained there for many years, till this condition was fulfilled. Then four *devatās* appeared before him in the form of a bull, of the fire that he served, of a swan and of a water-bird, and taught him meditation on *Brahma* as having four feet, each foot consisting of four parts. When he returned, he told his teacher what had happened, and requested him to teach him, if he pleased, for—

The *vidyā* known from a teacher alone is the best (*chāndo*, IV-9-3)

In these days we may not find a *guru*, that meditates on *Brahma* and has realisation. As the next best, we should go to one, who firmly believes that he is other than his body and the senses, who therefore does not get angry, when he is insulted, who is merciful to every one, making no distinction between those in any way connected with himself, and those that are not, who reports every action to the highest *Ātmā* present in his heart, and who sincerely repents for any lapses that may occur.

81    The *guru* will first remove the bandage from the disciple's eyes. At present he believes that he is his body, that he does not depend upon the highest *Ātmā*, and that he exists for himself or for his family. This thought is known as *ahamkāra*. The *guru* will remove this, and will make him learn (i) that he is other than his body, the senses and *prāṇa*, that he lives in the body, as one dwells in a house, and that he uses the senses as his instruments for enjoyment, (ii) that he is controlled by the highest *Ātmā*, as the bull yoked to a cart is led by the driver, (iii) that he is His property and exists for His sake, and (iv) that when he enjoys a pleasure, he does so in order that He may be pleased. Next, the *guru* will show the unworthy nature of the fruits enjoyed in this world and in heaven, drawing his attention to the faults that attend upon such enjoyment (See end of para 56 *supra*). Lastly, he will create a longing in him to reach the highest *Ātmā* by describing His *svarūpa*, His freedom from imperfections, the noble qualities that He possesses, the nature of the highest heaven, the various figures in which He appears and His doings for the helping of the

*juas*. The disciple will thus acquire *jñāna* (knowledge of himself and of the highest *Ātmā*), *virakti* (desirelessness) and *bhakti* (love for the highest *Ātmā*) He then becomes qualified for the next step—meditation on the highest *Ātmā*, known as *Brahma vidyā*

82 *Brahma vidyā* is continuous, vivid and loving meditation on *Brahma* This is enjoined in the following texts:

- (1) One that meditates (*vid*) on *Brahma* attains the highest (*ana* I-1), (2) *Ātmā*, dear, should be seen, be heard about, be thought about, be meditated on (*bṛihad* IV-4-5), (3) if the mind be pure, continuous unbroken (*dhruvā*) meditation will come, if meditation be continuous and unbroken, release from all knots (*avidyā*, desire, hate and the like) will follow (*chāndo*, VII-26 2), (4) The knot in the heart is cut, all doubts are solved, and all his *karmas* are destroyed, when He, the greatest among the great is seen (*mundā*, II-2-9)

All these texts point out the means to release, and therefore give the same teaching. It was pointed out in para 64 *supra* that when a general term and a particular term are used on the same subject, the former should be understood as denoting what is denoted by the latter Applying this principle, we should

take the general word *vid* in the first text to mean meditation, which is referred to in the second text. This also is a general term, for meditation may be continuous and unbroken, or not. In the light of the third text, the intention appears to be that the meditation should be continuous and unbroken, like a stream of oil poured from a cup. This continuous meditation may be vivid like perception by the eye or not. It is also a general term, and taking the third and fourth texts together, the meditation that leads to release should be held to be continuous and vivid meditation. And it should be loving meditation also. This is stated.

This *Ātmā* cannot be reached by mere thinking, by mere meditation, by mere hearing many terms. Whomsoever He chooses, by him alone is He reached, to Him He reveals his figure (*kaṭha*, II-23)

One, that is chosen by the highest *Ātmā*, is he who is dearest to Him, and he, that is dearest to Him, is one that loves Him most. Hence the love, which the meditator has for the highest *Ātmā*, creates a love in Him for the meditator, which becomes the means of reaching Him.

83 When one does *Brahma vidyā*, he should meditate on the following (1) on *Brahma* with the five qualities, without which no conception of Him can be formed. They are being *satya* (unchanging), *jñāna* (showing himself), *ananta* (without limitations), *ānanda* (bliss), and *amala* (without imperfections), (2) on *Brahma* as possessing certain qualities, which are specially mentioned in connection with the *vidyā*. In the *dakṣa vidyā* described in *chāndogya*, chapter VIII, eight qualities are so mentioned, and they are freedom from *karma*, freedom from old age, freedom from death, freedom from grief, freedom from hunger, freedom from thirst, possession of unchanging objects of desire and possession of an unfailing will. The meditation should be '*Brahma* is free from *karma*, *Brahma* is free from old age, and so on'. In connection with each quality meditation on *Brahma* should be repeated. Though He is the seat of all the qualities, yet His aspect as invested with one quality is different from the aspect as invested with another quality. (3) On the meditator himself in an aspect to be attained, when he will become free, for only by meditating on

that aspect that it will be attained      The rule is

What one meditates on in this world, that he becomes, when he departs from here (*chāndo*, III-14-1)

(4) On the fact that all the meditator's *karma* will be abandoned, when he leaves his last body, and that of them good deeds will go to his friends and bad deeds to his enemies This is stated

Then the meditator, shaking off good and bad deeds and free from all touch of matter, attains the highest likeness to Him (*munda*, III-1-3), His sons take his property, his friends his good deeds, his enemies his bad deeds (*ṣūtyāyana*)

(5) On the meditator's reaching the highest *Ātma* and attaining his own form      The mode of meditation is stated in the following text -

Shaking off *karma*, as a horse shakes off the hair on its back, released from the body, as the moon is released from the mouth of *rāhu* (in an eclipse) and throwing off the body, I will reach the eternal *Brahma*-world, the purpose of my life having been attained (*chāndo*, VIII-13 1)

Items (4) and (5) should be combined as shown in this text, the omission of one or the other is condemned



Those that meditate only on the removal of obstacles (*asambhūti*) enter dense darkness, those that find pleasure only on the attainment of their form (*sambhūti*) enter still denser darkness (*Iṣā*, verse 12)

(6) And lastly on the path known as *devayāna*, by which the meditator will journey to the highest heaven. This is enjoined in a verse of the *bhagavad gītā*

Knowing these paths, no *yogi* is deluded (at the time of departure) Therefore at all times meditate on the paths (VIII 27)

The two paths are the *devayāna*, and the path by which one of meritorious deeds goes to the heaven-world and returns

84. The next question is how meditation should be done. First, a place should be selected, in which no disturbance of any kind will happen. It is stated

Meditation should be done at a level place, that is pure, that is free from pebbles, fire and sand free from sound, water and the like. It should be such as will conduce to concentration of mind, and will not tire the eye. It may be a cave or a place not disturbed by wind (*śieta*, II-10)

‘Pure’—pure in itself, and not owned or controlled by impure persons, and not touched

by impure things. By the term 'water' reference is made to tanks, wells, or streams, that are frequented by people. The original has the word *āśraya* also, which means a building like a temple, at which people congregate. The reference to cave (*guhā*) should not be understood as prescribing that place, the intention is to suggest a retired place. This is stated in the *bhagavad gītā*

Let the doer of *karma yoga* ever fix the mind in a state, at which realisation will take place, remaining by himself in a retired place (VI-10)

'Ever'—every day at the time selected for *yoga*  
 'Retired place'—not frequented by people and not disturbed by sounds from outside. Even in such a place the meditator should be alone, and not allow even a disciple to be present. Next the meditator should sit and do meditation, standing or walking will cause fatigue, and lying down will bring on sleep. The *bhagavad gītā* states 'Sitting on a seat' (VI-12), and describes what the seat should be

A firm seat, neither much raised, nor very low, and covered over with a cloth, deer-skin, and *kuśa* grass (VI-11)

'*Firm seat*' made of wood to secure firmness. The seat should be covered with a cloth in order to make it soft, with a deer-skin over it to prevent crumpling and also for purity, with *kusa* grass over all for purity, and for the predominance of the *satva* quality. The mode of sitting is next pointed out.

Holding the body in such a way that the three parts (breast, neck and head) may be erect and straight (*śreṭa*, II-8), Holding the body, head and neck straight, immovable, and steady, and seeing the tip of the nose, so that the eyes may not wander (*bhagavad gītā* VI-13)

*Immovable*—without shaking of the body, *steady*—with a support for the back in order to prevent the fatigue that may result from holding the body erect and immovable. If the eyes be closed, outside objects will not be seen, but it may induce sleep. Hence the direction to see the tip of the nose. This will not be possible, when the mind is fixed on the object of meditation, the intention is that the eyes should be so fixed on the tip of the nose that nothing else may be seen.

85 Having taken his seat in the manner pointed out, the meditator should withdraw

the senses from outside objects and make them suspend their functions. The mind should be fixed on the object of meditation, and be prevented from wandering, and care should be taken that no thought of anything else intervenes. The first point is known as *pratyāhāra*, the second as *dhāraṇā*, and the last as *dhyāna*. In this the mind rests on a figure of the highest *Ātmā*, for the mind at the outset needs something that it can grasp (*āśraya*), it is also pure (*subha*), as it will remove the impurities of the meditator. Nothing else possesses both the qualities—being an *āśraya* and *subha*. If the figure be dropped, and the meditation be on the *svarūpa* alone, it is known as *samādhi*. These operations are thus enjoined

- (i) Firmly placing the senses along with the mind in the heart (*śveta* II-8), (ii) A clever person should be wide awake and hold the mind on the object, as a clever driver leads a carriage yoked to a vicious horse (*Ibid* II-9), (iii) When the five senses along with the mind remain without action, and *buddhi* does not work, that is said to be the highest movement. This steady fixing of the senses is regarded as *yoga* (*kaṭha*, VI-10 and 11), (iv) Controlling the thinking faculty (*bhagavad gītā*, VI-10), (v) Making the mind

one pointed controlling the functions of the mind and the senses (*Ibid*, 12)

The senses go to the *ātma* and are united with it, when the *jīva* is in deep sleep, and when he rises from the body in death. It is not clear whether they do so, when meditation is done. The first text should therefore be understood to mean merely that the senses should suspend their functions. This is stated in the third text. The mind thinks and wills. In the former capacity it is known as *chitta*, and in the latter as *buddhi*. The text therefore means that the five senses of perception should do no work, and that the mind should not think of anything else, and should cease to will. The senses and mind have been working in various ways, as compared with them, the state described in the verse is the highest, as it leads to release. The second text gives the warning that this work of holding the mind steadily on one thing is difficult, as the mind will wander, as a vicious horse will take the carriage where it pleases, unless the driver be vigilant.

86 This steady meditation on the highest *Ātma* should be done day by day, till the

meditator departs for the highest heaven  
This is stated

He should dwell in a pure place, recite his *veda*, direct his sons and disciples to do *dharma*, draw all his senses from everything other than the *ātma*, and do no injury to any being except when directed by the *śāstra*. Living in this manner all his life, he reaches *Brahma* world and does not return (to *samsāra*) (*chando*, VIII-15-1)

The recitation of the *veda* should be understood to represent all the other duties of the meditator's stage of life. Though the text does not mention meditation the reference to the duties of his position should be taken to represent meditation, as they are done to help it to grow.

87. Meditations on the highest *Ātmā* has been described. Let us consider what help it needs. As a horse takes its rider to his destination, when it is provided with a harness, so meditation requires help. Three kinds of help are stated in the *veda*.

- (i) Him *brāhmanas* desire to meditate on by recitation of the *veda*, by *yajna* by giving by *tapas* in the form of absence of desire (*bṛhad*, VI-4-22), (ii) Hence, one, that knows this, controlling the mind, controlling the senses withdrawing from worldly

pursuits, taking good and evil with serenity, and with the mind one-pointed, should see the *Ātmā* in himself (*Ibid*, 23); (iii) Hence the *brāhmaṇa* should attain *pāṇḍitya* and desire to remain with *būlya*; attaining, *būlya* and *pāṇḍitya*, he should be a *muni* (*Ibid*, V-v-1).

The first text shows that meditation requires the help of the *karmas* enumerated. Of them the first three pertain to the house-holder. The term *tapas* may also mean diminution of sense enjoyment. In this sense it is the principal duty of the forest-dweller and of the mendicant. Compare with the following text:

There are three seats of *dharma*: *yajnas*, recitation of the *veda* and making gifts form the first, *tapas* alone is the second, the student, that lives in the house of his teacher, and uses up his body completely in his services, is the third (*chāndo.*, II-23-1).

The text therefore enumerates the duties of the various stages of life and should be taken to represent all other duties of those stages not specially mentioned. They are helps to meditation, and not to the desire to meditate. Compare with the following statements: 'He wishes to kill with a knife, and with a horse he desires to go.' The knife is a help to

killing, and the horse is a help to going. Similarly here, they wish to meditate, the helps to meditation being the duties of the meditator's stage of life. They help in this manner. Meditation must become vivid like sense perception, it must be marked with a high degree of love, it must grow every day, and it should be done throughout life. If the duties referred to be done as the worship of the highest *Ātmā*, that Being will be pleased, and will help the meditation to grow, removing all obstacles.

88 To go to the second kind of help. The first is control of the mind (*sama*). The mind cannot be controlled at the time of meditation, unless the control has been practised for a long time. In every piece of work, that is being done, the mind must be fixed on the work, it will wander, but must be brought back and fixed on the work again. If this be practised for a long time, it will obey its lord. The practice of this control is thus stated:

Turning to whatever object the fickle mind goes forth, leaving the *ātmā*, restrain it from that object and place it under the entire control of the *ātmā* (*bhagavad gītā* VI 26)



This verse occurs where meditation on the *jñātmā* is described, but it is of universal application. The second help is control of the senses (*dama*). This also should be practised for a long time. Whenever a sense is about to contact an object, and the contact is undesirable, it should be withdrawn from it, as stated in the verse

When one, like a tortoise drawing in its limbs, completely draws in his senses as they begin to contact objects, his knowledge of the *ātmā* is firmly held (*bhagavad gītā*, II 58)

The third is withdrawal (*uparati*)—withdrawal from *karmas* that are prohibited, and from *karmas* that are pointed out as the means to some fruits. Withdrawal from the former is needed, as otherwise meditation will not be possible. This is stated

Who does not desist from evil deeds the force of whose desire and hate has not abated, whose mind is tossed about by numerous undertakings, and who for that reason cannot steadily maintain his mind on any object, by him He cannot be reached (*kāṭha* II 24)

In this verse certain conditions are enjoined as subsidiary to meditation. Though these things

are desirable in themselves, they may also be subsidiary to meditation, as truth-speaking, though desirable in itself, is yet subsidiary to a *kratu* (a *karma* in which many offerings are made) If one desires to commence meditation on the highest *Ātmā* without these conditions, meditation owing to their absence cannot be perfected Withdrawal from *karmas* that are the means to fruits is a condition, which as stated in para 81 constitutes the qualification for meditation on *Brahma* The fourth help is taking good and evil with serenity (*tītikṣhā*); This should be practised steadily as stated in the verse

His knowledge of the *Ātmā* is firmly held,  
 whose attachment to any object is not  
 strong enough to impel him to action, and  
 who on the coming of a good or an evil  
 neither likes nor dislikes (*bhagavad gītā*,  
 II 57)

If this be done, serenity of mind will come by the disappearance of desire and aversion, and of the feelings that accompany them The last help under this head is one-pointedness—*i e.*, freedom from being tossed about by numerous undertakings This condition is one of those stated in the *kathavallī* text quoted above To

go to the third kind of help. The first of these is *pāṇḍitya* i.e., such knowledge of the *ātmā* and of the highest *Ātmā* as will never be shaken, and as will enable a person to keep what is desirable and reject what is not desirable. This is necessary for the attainment of *jñāna*, *vairakti* and *bhakti*, which together make up the qualification for meditation on the highest *Ātmā*. The second help is to remain with *bālyā*, i.e., the nature of a child. The meaning is that as the child does not show his ability, the meditator should not parade his learning or his capacity to meditate. Humility is of the utmost importance and as it is said, pride goes before a fall. The last help is *mauna*, which is to fix the mind on the object of meditation and to continuously think of it. This will facilitate meditation and also keep the mind from going to undesirable things.

89 One other help is stated in the *śvetāśvatara*

With moderation in action the meditator should restrain the breath within and when it has become weak, he should let it through the nostril (II 9)

What is meant by moderation in action is explained by the *bhagavad gītā*

*Yoga* is never for one that eats too much, nor for one that abstains from food to excess, nor for one too much addicted to sleep or wakefulness. Pain killing *yoga* is attained by one that observes moderation in food and exercise, moderation in activity (that brings on fatigue), and moderation in sleep and waking (VI-16 and 17)

In addition to moderation in food, the meditator should see that the food is pure. For,

If the food be pure the mind will be pure, if the mind be pure continuous meditation (on *Brahma*) will come (*ch'indo*, VII 26-2)

Permission is given to take any food only in cases of danger to life. This is shown by the *veda*. One *Ushast*, foremost among those doing *brahma vidyā*, ate a portion of boiled gram, that was being eaten by an elephant-driver, but declined the drink offered to him, saying

I should not have lived, if I had not eaten these, (but when the danger has passed) to drink the impure water (offered by you) would be to yield to desire (*chundo*, I-10 4)

90 The helps to meditation are classified and described in the *viśṇu purāṇa*.

The *yogi* that has no desire, should practise abstention from sexual intercourse, abstention from doing injury to

others, truth-speaking, abstention from theft, and abstention from the receipt of prohibited objects. By doing so he will make the mind fit for meditation (VI-7-36)

Recitation of the *veda*, purity, a happy state of mind, *tapas* (diminution of sense enjoyment), should be practised with a mind under control, and it should be turned towards the highest *Brahma* (37),

Those five are said to be *yamas*, these five are said to be *niyamas*. They give superior fruits, if practised for them, they yield release to those without desire (38),

The *yogi* should select an *āsana* from the *āsanas* beginning with *bhadrāsana*, and seated in that posture observing the qualities named *yama* and *niyama*, he should do meditation (39)

The air known as *prāṇa* should be made obedient to the will by practice. It is known as *prāṇāyāma*, and it is of two kinds—*sabija* and *abija* (40),

It is again of two kinds by *prāṇa* and *apāna* overcoming each other, the third kind is by the overcoming of both (41)

In these verses four kinds of helps are described. In para 88 reference was made to the help known as *uparati*—withdrawal from prohibited *karmas*. The principal among them are enumerated in verse 36 for the guidance of

*yogis* These prohibited *karmas* are doing injury to others, speaking falsehood, theft, and the receipt of prohibited objects from others. Under the last of these we may include the receipt of anything from impure persons. Sexual intercourse with one's own wife is not prohibited like the others, but to one that does meditation complete abstention is necessary, for sexual intercourse weakens the capacity to do steady meditation. In chapter viii, section 5 of the *chândogya* complete abstention is identified with *yajnas* of various kinds, as it enables one to do them, and release cannot be attained without it. In the next verse recitation of the *veda* and *tapas* are mentioned, and they should be taken to represent other duties of the meditator's stage of life. Purity (*saucha*) is the foundation on which the performance of all prescribed *karmas* rests, and this is therefore added. A happy state of mind (*santosha*) is the effect produced by the practice of *titiksha* (see para 88). When joy and grief are no longer felt for the attainment or loss of worldly objects, one will be happy in the contemplation of his own nature. Verse 38 states that the qualities enumerated in the two

preceding verses are *yamas* and *niyamas*, and that they will help in the attainment of release. The next verse deals with *āsana*, the mode of sitting, when meditation is done. In para 84 it was stated that the meditator should sit, and do meditation. The mode of sitting was not pointed out. This is done in books on *yoga*. *Bhadrāsana* is one of the modes, the meditator may select any one of them, the only condition being that the mode of sitting should not disturb the mind. Verses 40 and 41 deal with the control of the breath. *Prāna* is the out-going breath, and *apāna* is the in-coming breath. When the in-coming breath is withheld, and the out-going breath alone works, it is known as *rechaka*, when this is reversed, it is known as *puraka*, and when both are withheld, it is known as *lumbhaka*. Thus the control of breath is of three kinds. Each of these may be done along with the mental recitation of a *mantra* or not. In the former case it is known as *sabīja* and in the latter as *abīja*.

91 The mode of meditation is thus described

One, that knows how *yoga* should be done,  
should control the senses that are attached

to sound and other qualities of sense objects and make them work in unison with the mind. He will then be doing *pratyāhāra* (43). From this comes a very high degree of control over the very fickle senses. If they are not under control the *yogi* cannot do *yoga* (44). When the breath is brought under control by *prāṇāyāma* and the senses by *pratyāhāra* he should make the mind remain on an object, that is pure and is capable of being grasped (45). When the thought of the figure held steadily by the mind with the help of *dharaṇā* is repeated continuously without the intervention of a dissimilar thought it is *dhyaṇa*. It is brought about O king by the first six *angas* (91). When this stream of thought grasps only the *svarūpa* and leaves out particulars like size and colour it is known as *samādhi*. It is to be brought about by the mind with *dhyāna* (92).

To draw the senses from sense objects, and make them work in unison with the mind is the first step, it is known as *pratyāhāra*. The fixing of the mind on a figure of the highest *Ātma* is the next step, it is known as *dhāraṇā*. This figure is both pure (*subha*), and capable of being grasped (*āśraya*) other forms like the bodies of bound *jīvas* can be grasped, but they are not pure. The freed *jīva* has become pure, but he cannot be grasped, and he is fit



to be connected with impurities. The *svarūpa* of the highest *Ātmā* is pure, but it cannot be grasped by one, that has begun to do *yoga*. The figure of the highest *Ātmā* alone is both *subha* and *āśraya*. The mind should dwell on one part of the figure, then upon another, and so on. When this practice succeeds, the mind should be fixed on the whole figure. The next step is to repeat the thought, make it flow in a continuous stream, and prevent the intervention of a dissimilar thought. This is known as *dhyāna*. When this is established, the last step is to drop the figure of the highest *Ātmā* and meditate on His *svarūpa* only. This is known as *samādhi*, and is the means to release.

92 The first three of the steps described are stated in the *bhagavad gītā* also

Let the *yogi* with the sole help of the mind restrain all the senses from every object. Let him slowly withdraw from all outside objects, with knowledge and perseverance, let him fix the mind on the *Ātmā*, and not think of anything else (VI-24 and 25)

*Pratyāhāra* is stated in the first sentence. The second sentence states that this should be practised with patience. 'Knowledge' means the thought that the objects are related to the

body and not to the *ātmā*. Objects of desire are of two classes—those born of the imagination, and other objects. To the former class belong children, land and the like. These should be completely abandoned. The other objects cannot be so easily given up, being born of contacts like heat and cold. Being inevitable, they should be endured with equanimity. The last two sentences of the verse state *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*. As it occurs where meditation on the *ātmā* is described, reference is made to the *ātmā* but the mode of meditation is the same.

93. One more help to meditation, and a very important help, is realisation of the *ātmā*. The meditator is now distracted by objects of desire, and by identifying himself with the body. He cannot therefore control his mind and senses, and practise *tītikṣhā*, one of the helps described in para 88. To remove this obstacle, one should learn the nature of the *ātmā* from a teacher, and practise the doing of *karma* without attachments. Attachments are of three kinds—attachment to the fruit of the *karma*, attachment to the *karma* itself, viz., the thought 'This *karma* is mine,' and attachment to the doership, viz., the thought 'I do this

*karma*.' These attachments are misplaced. As the *jīva* exists for the highest *Ātmā*, he has to please Him with every action of his; and he has no business to look for any fruit for himself. He must therefore regard every action as the worship of the highest *Ātmā*. Hence, the action belongs to Him alone, not to the doer. As every action is done by five working together, *viz.*, the body, an organ of action, *prāṇa*, the *jīva* and the highest *Ātmā*, one should not think that he alone is the doer. This is stated by the *bhagavad gītā* :

The body, the *ātmā*, the five organs of action, the *prāṇa*, and *daivam*, the fifth in the list of causes. Whatever work of body, tongue or mind, good or evil, a mortal begins, these five are the causes. This being so, whosoever from lack of knowledge sees himself as the sole doer does not see correctly (XVIII-14, 15 and 16)

Hence every action should be done as the worship of the highest *Ātmā*, and with the thought 'This is not done by me in my true nature; it is done by my connection with the body, with the senses or with *prāṇa*; and they are moved by the highest *Ātmā* in accordance with my *karma*'. If this be done for a considerable period of time, then desires for fruits

being starved, sense objects will withdraw, i.e., the person will feel indifference to them, love for the highest *Ātmā* will become strong, and his true nature will be firmly impressed on his mind. These are respectively *virakti*, *bhakti* and *jñāna*. They will grow at the same time, and the growth will be helped by the highest *Ātmā*, who pleased with the worship will weaken the qualities *rajas* and *tamas* of his mind, and strengthen the *satva* quality. A time will come, when he will so firmly hold knowledge of his own nature, that his mind will not be ruffled by pleasure and pain, and by respectful and disrespectful treatment, he will regard a potsherd, a lump of earth and a piece of gold in the same light, and he will no longer divide men around him into friends, foes and neutrals. He will then be fit for doing *yoga* on the *ātma*. In due course he will attain realisation. Hitherto he believed what he was told about his own nature, he will now experience it himself. This will fill him with such delight, that the hankering after sense enjoyment, which lurked in his mind in a subtle form will go for good. This is stated

The objects depart from the owner of the body, when he ceases to feed on them ; only yearning is left behind. Even this yearning departs, when the *ātmā* is seen (*bhagavad gītā*, II-59).

The person will now be fit for doing meditation on *Brahma*. Realisation of the *ātmā* is thus a help to this meditation. This is stated by the *veda* :

The wise man first meditates on himself, and realising his nature, he meditates on *Deva* and abandons joy and grief (*kaṭha*, II-12).

This is explained by the *bhagavad gītā* :

Are you unable to keep the mind steadily on Me ? Then by means of *abhyāsa* desire to reach Me.

If you are unable to do even *abhyāsa*, do My work with love. Even by doing work for My sake you will reach the goal.

Are you unable to do even this, having taken up meditation on Me ? Then turn to meditation on the *ātmā* and with the mind controlled, give up the fruits of actions.

Far better than *abhyāsa* is realisation (of the *ātmā*), better than realisation is meditation (on the *ātmā*), better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of actions (XII-9 to 12).

By the term *abhyāsa* reference is made to the bringing back of the mind over and over again

it wanders, and fixing it on the subject of meditation. The term 'My work' refers to works like the following: building a temple, making a flower garden, lighting the temple, repeating the names of the highest *Ātmā*, singing His praises, etc. One may not be able to control the mind, and engage it in contemplation, for the tendencies of nature lead to action. Action is therefore indicated, but action to be regarded as the work of the highest *Ātmā*. The last verse consoles one that is unhappy at being unable to adopt the step nearest to his goal. It advises his going to that step that is easy, and then working his way up. The steps are enumerated with reference to easiness, each step being easier than the preceding one.

94 Meditation on *Brahma* has thus been described. There are many modes of doing it. For, though the object of meditation is the same, viz., the highest *Ātmā*, yet His attributes that enter into the meditation are different. As the fruit to be attained by all the meditations is the same, one may adopt any one of them.

## SECTION VIII

### FRUITS OF MEDITATION

95. To consider next the fruits of meditation on *Brahma*. The fruits are of four kinds—the abandonment of *karma*, the abandonment of the gross body, the abandonment of the subtle body, and the attainment of own form. The first kind comes to the meditator, while he remains in his gross body. This is stated :

When one knows this and makes offerings,  
all his evil deeds are burnt up as the cotton  
of the *ishtka* plant thrown into the fire is  
burnt up (*chāndo*, V-24-3) His *karmas* are  
destroyed, when He is seen, as compared  
with whom all superior beings appear as  
inferior beings (*munḍa*, II-2-9)

These texts refer to the meditator's past *karma*, including under that term both good and evil deeds. Good deeds are on the same level as evil deeds as to their antagonism to the fruit of meditation. There is also *vedic* declaration on the point. Referring to both

good and evil deeds it is said " All evil deeds depart from him " (*chāndo*, VIII-4-1) Then he shakes off good and evil deeds (*lauśhitaki*, I-37) Good deeds also are denoted by the term *pāpma*, as their fruits are unwelcome to one seeking release from *karma*

*Question*    There is a verse that states -

*Karma*, the fruit of which has not been experienced, is not destroyed even by the lapse of thousand millions of *kalpas* (world-ages)

How can the destruction of *karma* stated by the *vedic* texts be accepted? *Reply*    There is no conflict between this verse and the *vedic* texts, for they refer to different matters. The verse confirms the efficacy of *karma* to produce its fruit, while the texts declare that meditation on the highest *Ātmā* destroys its capacity to yield its fruit. There is no more conflict between them than there is between the capacity of fire to produce heat, and the power of water to allay it. This is a very merciful dispensation. If all past *karma* were to be wiped out by enjoyment, there would be no release whatever, for such wiping out the possession of a body would be *sine qua non*,



and in that body the making of more *karma* would be inevitable

96 This destruction of past *karma* takes place, when meditation is attained, that is, when the stage is reached, in which meditation becomes as vivid as sense perception, for the text is "when He is seen" *Karma* produces in a person a tendency to do *karma* of the same kind, and leads to some fruit This capacity is destroyed, when it has accrued. This capacity is the pleasure or displeasure of the highest *Atma* The meditation is His worship and cancels the pleasure and displeasure

97. This destruction of *past karma* should be restricted to *karma* that has not begun to operate For a text states

For him there is delay only so long as he is  
not released (from his body), then he is  
united (to Sat) (*chāndo*, VI-14-2)

Here a limit is fixed, beyond which the reaching of the goal will not be delayed, and this limit is the continuance of the body, which was brought about by the *karma* that has begun to yield fruit, and this fruit must be experienced

*Question* How long will this be? *Reply.* This *karma* should be expended by enjoyment. If this can be done, while the meditator is in the body, in which meditation is attained, then the result follows, when that body falls. If not, he must take up as many bodies as may be needed to expend the *karma* fully, for it must be expended by enjoyment.

*Question again* Here is a text stating

This *jīva* rises from this body, reaches the highest Light and appears in his own form (*chānd.* VIII 12-2),

and it refers to 'this body'. *Reply* It does not state that release is attained, when the particular body falls down at death, for *smṛitis* state that men doing *brahma vidyā* like *Vidura* are reborn. The intention in referring to 'this body' is merely to compare it to a prison. This view is confirmed by the *bhagavad gītā* (IX-33), where *Śrī Kṛishṇa* refers to the body and observes 'This world perishable and full of misery'.

98 In regard to good deeds, the destruction of such among them as will help meditation is delayed, till his death.

99 So far as to past *karma* *Karma* done subsequently to the attainment of meditation does not stick to the meditator. This is stated.

As water does not stick to a lotus leaf, so no evil *karma* will stick to one that thus meditates (*chūndo*, IV-14-3), The *ātmā* that knows the nature of *Brahma*, on knowing Him, is not polluted with evil deed (*bṛihad.*, VI-4-23)

This effect should be restricted to *karma* done unconsciously. The text 'Who does not desist from evil deeds etc' (*katha*, II-24), indicates that complete withdrawal from evil doing is the means by which meditation may be perfected *Question* May *agnihotra* and other duties of one's stage of life cease to be done? They are covered by the expression subsequent good *karma*, and they will not stick to the doer *Reply* They should continue to be done, for they are done to help meditation. It becomes every day more and more powerful by practice, and in order that this may happen the duties should be performed. Otherwise, the mind will become impure, and meditation will become impossible.

100 *Second kind of fruit.* When the time for throwing up the gross body arrives, the

meditators senses unite with the mind, the mind with the senses unites with *prāna*, *prāna* with the senses and the mind unites with the *jīva*, and the *jīva* thus equipped unites with the five elements in a subtle condition. The *jīva* in this subtle body unites with the highest *Ātmā*. This is stated

Fire unites with the highest *devatā*

The term 'fire' represents all the other elements also. It must be assumed that this union serves a purpose in accordance with the *vedic* statement, and this purpose is to give the *jīva* some rest after the fatigues of separation from the gross body. This is analogous to the rest taken every day in deep sleep. This union with the highest *devatā* should not be confounded with the merging of a product in its cause, as in final dissolution. It is an intimate union like the union of speech with the mind. The term in the original for 'unites' is *sampadyate*, and it is brought down from the first clause, and is added in the other clauses, in which there is no finite verb. In the other cases the term denotes a particular kind of union, and there is no authority for taking it to mean anything else here. Nor is any

purpose served at the time by the body being dissolved in the cause

101 The meditator then rises from the heart through a blood vessel that goes from it to the top of the head This is stated

There are one hundred and one blood vessels of the heart, of them one goes to the top of the head He that rises through it attains immortality, the other blood vessels are for other ways of getting out (*chāndo*, VIII-6-6)

No doubt need be entertained as to this taking place invariably, on the ground that the blood vessels are many and very minute, and that the departing *jīva* cannot distinguish the particular blood vessel from the others and enter it The heart is lit up at the entrance into the blood vessel Favoured by the highest *Atmā* who is present in his heart, he sees the entrance and gets out by the particular blood vessel stated by the text The departing *jīva* then journeys to the sun along with his rays This is stated

When he gets out of the body then he goes up only along these rays (of the sun) (*chāndo*, VIII-6-5)

This is affirmed by the particle *eva* (only) Even at night the sun's rays are available, as

one may know from the experiencing of heat during summer. In winter the heat, being overpowered by cold, is not perceived, as on a rainy day. The ever-present connection of blood vessels with the sun's rays is stated

As a long high road enters two villages, this and that in the very same way these rays of the sun enter two worlds—this and that. They extend from that sun and enter these blood vessels, they extend from these blood vessels and enter that sun (*chūndo*, VIII-6-2)

102 There is no restriction in his case as to the time of departure, he may die by day or by night, he may depart in the six months of the sun's northward progress or in the other part of the year. For he is released from all *karma* at death. That portion of the previous *karma*, that had not begun to yield fruit, perished when meditation was attained. The remainder lasted only till the last body was thrown up. And any *karma*, that might be done unconsciously since the attainment of meditation, does not stick to him. Thus, there being no *karma* left, that can lead one downward, the reaching of the highest *Ātma* is certain. This is stated

For him there is delay, only so long as he is not released (from the body), then he is united (to *Sat*) (*chāndo*, VI-14 2)

103 *Third kind of fruit* The departing *jiva* travels along the path known as *devayāna*. This is thus described by two texts of the *chāndogya*: Light, day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the sun's northward progress, the year, the sun, the moon and lightning. The *purusha* in the last takes the *jiva* to *Brahma*. *Bṛihad āraṇyaka*, VIII-2, gives the same description, except that it has *devaloka* in the place of the year between the six months and the sun. The path being one, both the year and *devaloka* are included in the path. As the terms denoting periods of time are so arranged, that periods of shorter duration are followed by periods of longer duration, one's mind goes to the year from the six months. The year therefore comes after the six months, and then *devaloka*. In another text of the *bṛihad āraṇyaka*, VII-10, *Vāyu* is mentioned before the sun. We have thus *devaloka* and *vāyu* before the sun. Now *devaloka* means the world of the *devas*. The term is a general term, while *vāyu* is a particular term, and

both indicate the same *devatā*. The *kaushitaki* mentions *Varuna*, *Indra* and *Prajāpati* in addition. Of these *Varuna* is connected with lightning, He is the lord of the waters, and controls clouds, and lightning appears in clouds. Hence *Varuna* comes after lightning. The other two, *Indra* and *Prajāpati*, having been mentioned, should find a place. On the principle that new comers come at the end, they should come after *Varuna*. As the *purusha* in lightning carries meditators to *Brahma*, *Varuna* and the other two help him.

104    Light, day and the rest up to *Prajāpati* mentioned in connection with the path are carriers (*ātivāhikas*) deputed by the highest *Ātmā* to take meditators to Himself. The text is 'That *purusha* not human (*amānata*) leads them to *Brahma*'. This is found at the end of the context in the *chāndogya*, and as there is no difference in this respect between the person in lightning and those mentioned before him, we conclude that this description applies to all of them. The terms light, day and the rest denote the *devatas*, who control what those terms denote.



105. The question arises where the meditators are carried. It may be said that they go to the four-faced being ; for he is in a limited place, and to reach him going along a path is appropriate ; but the highest *Ātmā* is omnipresent, and the meditator need not go anywhere to reach Him. This superficial view is incorrect. The word used in the text is *brahma* ; This is in the neuter gender, and denotes the highest *Ātmā*. If it denoted the four-faced one, the form of the word would be *brahmānam*, which is in the masculine gender. Next, the person, that goes on the path, is said to attain immortality, and he does not return to *samsāra*. This could not happen, if the four-faced one were the goal. He is a product of evolution, and his life being two *parārdhas*, he must perish at the end. This is stated :

All the worlds, including the world of *Brahmā*, are perishable , and one that goes to them must return (*bhagavad gītā*, VIII-16)

On the other hand, the meditator is said to go to 'The eternal *Brahma*-world' (*chāndo*., VIII-13-1). This means that the world has not been made. This is the literal meaning of the term *akṛitam* in the original. Hence

meditators are carried to the highest *Ātmā* alone

106 The treatment that the meditator receives on the path is described in the *kaushī-takī*. He approaches the stream known as *virajā*. In front of it is a tank named *ara*, beyond this, but not far from it, are persons with canes in their hands to drive those that do not meditate on *Brahma* away from the stream. Before reaching the tank, he is received by five hundred *apsaras* (beautiful women), who have been sent by the highest *Ātmā*. A hundred have garlands in their hands, a hundred have ointment, a hundred have saffron powder, a hundred have cloths, a hundred have ornaments. They adorn the meditator with the adornment pertaining to *Brahma*. He does not mind the women, the cloths or ornaments but is intent on going to *Brahma*. He comes to the tank *ara*, and goes forward. He comes to the persons with canes, and they stand aside and let him go forward. He comes to the stream *virajā*, and crosses it by mere willing. This is the order stated in the *upaniṣad*. The statement that he crosses the stream by mere willing shows that he has

no body then. The subtle body is dropped on reaching the stream, the meeting with the *apsaras* and adornment come on the other side of the stream. For this purpose he is given a divine body. He then goes to *ara*. He then comes to a tree named *tilya*, then the smell of *Brahma* enters him. He comes to a fort named *sālayya*, then the taste of *Brahma* enters him. He comes to the city named *aparāṇṭa*, then the brightness of *Brahma* enters him. He comes to the gate keepers of the city named *Indra* and *Prajāpati*, they stand aside and allow him to enter. He comes to a golden palace named *vibhupramita* then the grace of *Brahma* enters him. He comes to the seat named *ūchakshaṇā*, it is the *devatā* in charge of knowledge, and he becomes all-knowing. He comes to the sofa (*paryanka*) named *amitaujas*. On this the highest *Ātmā* is seated. The meditator gets up the seat. Then a conversation takes place between him and the highest *Ātmā*.

*Question* Who art thou?

*Reply* I am *ritu* (1), I am what comes into existence in *ritu*. I came from ether

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(1) This means a period of two months, and indicates time in general

(*ākāśa*) on my way from the heaven-world. Thence I got into a woman's womb, and then came out of it as man. Such birth is cause for fear. You are the *ātma* of everything being born of man's semen, you are my *ātma* (1), what you are I am that (2)

Q. How am I *ātma*?

R. For you pervade all things.

Q. Who am I?

R. You are *Satyam*

Q. What is that *satyam*?

R. What is other than *devas* and *prāṇas* is *sat*; *devas* and *prāṇas* are *tyam*; all this is referred to by the word *satyam*. The expression 'I am *satyam*' means I am all this (3).

Q. By what did you attain my names denoting men?

R. By *prāṇa* (4)

(1) The meaning implied is—I, whose *ātma* you are, had all this time fallen into the ocean of *samsāra*.

(2) He identifies himself with the highest *Ātma*.

(3) The meaning is—you are everything, being their *ātma*, you are therefore my *ātma* also

(4) By my connection with *prāṇa*, I got a body and was known as man. Similarly in the two other cases. He thus differentiates himself from his bodies

*Q* By what did you obtain my names denoting women?

*R* By speech

*Q* By what did you obtain my names denoting neuters?

*R* By mind

*Q* With what did you perceive smell (1)?

*R* With the nose

*Q* With what did you perceive colour?

*R* With the eye

*Q* With what did you perceive sound?

*R* With the ear

*Q* With what did you perceive taste?

*R* With the tongue

*Q* With what did you do actions?

*R* With the hands

*Q* With what did you perceive pleasure and pain?

*R* With the body

*Q* With what did you feel pleasure of sexual intercourse?

*R* With the sex organ

*Q* With what did you do goings about?

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(1) This differentiates him from the sense organ. The word denoting it is in the instrumental case

belonged to another. Though the natural form has been ever present, it was prevented from appearing by his *karma*, and this obstruction is now removed. This is what is meant by the appearance of his own form. This is stated by *Ṣaunaka*

By digging a pond, water is not made, only what existed before is made to appear, similarly, by the destruction of undesirable elements *jñāna* and other qualities appear, but are not made, for they are permanent qualities of the *Ātmā*

108 What is the own form that now appears? *Reply* The freed *jīva* appears with eight qualities, which he possesses in common with the highest *Ātmā*. They are freedom from *karma*, freedom from old age death, grief, hunger and thirst, and possession of unchanging objects of desire and of an unfrustrated will (*chāndo.*, VIII-7-1). They are stated to pertain to the highest *Ātmā* also in the same *upaniṣad* (VIII-1-5). The view is held in some quarters that the freed *jīva* is mere *jñāna*, on the ground that he is stated to be *vijnāna-ghana* only (*bṛihad*, IV-4-12), and that he can therefore possess no attributes. The attributes

110 It was stated that the freed *jiva* possesses an unfrustrated will. The effect of this is thus described

If he desires to see those that were his fathers  
(in previous births) by his will alone the  
fathers come up (*chāṇḍo* VIII ° 1)

There is no text that states that some other effort on his part is needed. If it did exist it might be necessary to understand the particle *alone* (*eva*) in the expression 'by his will alone,' as it was understood in the expression '*ujjvina ghana* only' (para 108). But there is nothing to obstruct his will. It cannot be *karma* as in the *jiva*'s bound condition for he has no more *karma*. It cannot be the highest *Ātmā* for it is only what He desires that will be attempted.

111 Has the freed *jiva* a body and senses?  
*Repl.* He has no body and senses brought about by *karma* he may take as many bodies as he likes for it is stated

He appears as one he appears as three as  
five as seven (*chāṇḍo* VII 26 2)

Now as the *jiva* is one and indivisible he cannot appear as many. This must therefore

Free from all touch of matter, he attains the highest likeness (to Him) (*munḍa*, III-1-3).

One may think that they are; but this is not sound. The *bhṛigu vallu* enumerates the world-activities as constituting a definition of *Brahma*. If He had to share them with freed *jivas*, it would cease to be a definition. For a defining mark is found only in that which is defined. In the *antaryāmi brāhmaṇa* the whole of the world is described as connected with the highest *Ātmā* only, and there is no mention of the freed *jiva* in those places.

113 What then is the utmost likeness reached by the freed *jiva*? *Reply* This is in regard to enjoyment only. It is stated

He enjoys all good qualities with *Brahma* the all-knowing (*ana* I-2)

The likeness of the freed *jiva* to the highest *Ātmā* is stated in general terms, and here is a particular case of likeness in the matter of enjoyment. Hence the general statement should be limited to the particular case. The freed *jiva*'s likeness to the highest *Ātmā*, and the possession of an unfrustrated will should be explained so as to fit in with the control of the world, that pertains to Him alone.



## SECTION IX

### PRAPATTI

115. From the description given in section VII, the means to release—meditation on *Brahma*—appears to be a very difficult matter. Is there no easier means? *Reply.* There is an easier means known as *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*. It is one of the *brahma vidyās* described by the *veda*. It is known as *nyāsa vidyā* and is thus described in the *taittirīya-nārāyaṇa* :

Unite yourself, pronouncing the syllable known as *praṇava*.

The union is with the highest *Ātmā* ; and the meaning of the syllable is ' I am for you alone '. The person, that does this, surrenders himself (*i.e.*, his *svarūpa*) to the highest *Ātmā*. Hitherto he thought that he existed for himself or for his family ; he now realises that he exists for the highest *Ātmā*, and to please Him by his service ; and he surrenders himself. There are two other elements in *prapatti*. One

is the surrender of the burden of meditation. One, that does meditation on the highest *Ātmā*, retains this burden, and looks to the highest *Ātmā* only for the fruits of meditation. The person, that does *prapatti* states 'I am unable to do meditation. do you stand in the place of meditation and give me its fruits? This means do not make me take any further steps in the matter. This may be thus illustrated. Two persons go to the owner of a fruit garden, and ask for graft mango fruits. The owner states 'I will give you a chit, take it to the garden and receive the fruits from the gardener. One of them takes the chit goes to the garden, and receives the fruits. The other states 'I am unable to walk so far, do you get the fruits from the garden, and give them to me'. The owner complies with the request in consideration of his inability. The meditator is like the former, and the person, that does *prapatti*, is like the latter. The other element in *prapatti* is the surrender of the fruit, by doing *prapatti*, one is released from *samsāra*, and does enjoy the highest *Ātmā* and his noble qualities, but he does so in order to please Him. The pleasure of the highest *Ātmā* is the principal

fruit; and the happiness of the freed *jīva* is subsidiary to it. The highest *Ātmā* is like a loving parent, that is happy, if his children are happy. Similarly, the highest *Ātmā* is happy, if the freed *jīva* is happy, and the latter is happy, as this will make the former happy. Thus *prapatti* consists of three elements—surrender of the *svarūpa*, surrender of the burden of doing meditation, and surrender of the fruit.

116 *Prapatti* occupies but a few minutes, and does not therefore require the various helps that meditation needs. It requires helps of another kind. What they are may be seen by considering what takes place, when a person deposits a valuable article with another. At the moment of making the deposit he will resolve to be loyal to him and desist from such actions as will displease him. He will have full confidence in the capacity and willingness of the other to receive the deposit. He will explain to him his own inability to take care of it and request him to accept the deposit. Finally, he will make the deposit, and having done this, he will be easy in mind. These are the five helps that *prapatti* needs—viz, (i) resolve to be loyal, (ii) withdrawal from

disloyal action, (iii) full faith in the capacity and willingness of the person that accepts the burden, (iv) making that person realise his helplessness, and (v) requesting him to accept the burden. With these five helps (*angas*) *prapatti* should be done.

117. These five helps may be observed in the *prapatti* done by *Vibhīṣhaṇa* as described in the *rāmāyana*. *Vibhīṣhaṇa* advised his brother *Rāvaṇa* to send *Sītā* back to *Śrī Rāma*. *Rāvaṇa* did not relish the advice, and spoke harshly to him. *Vibhīṣhaṇa* then abandoned his home and family, and crossing the sea, sought refuge with *Śrī Rāma*. He said

A *rākṣasa* of evil conduct known as *Rūlaṇa* is the king of the *rākṣasa*. I am his younger brother, known as *Vibhīṣhaṇa*. By him *Sītā* was carried away from *janasthāna* after killing *jaṭāyus*, and she is confined in the custody of *rākṣasa* women. She is helpless and unhappy. I spoke to him frequently pointing out diverse reasons, and suggesting that he should go to *Rāma* and surrender *Sītā* to him. Being prompted by unfavourable time, *Rāvaṇa* did not receive the good advice given to him, as a dying person does not receive medicine. Harsh words were addressed to me, and I was insulted as a servant is. I have abandoned my sons and wives, and have come to *Rāghava*.

as my refuge Quickly report to the great-minded *Rāghava* the refuge of all the worlds, that I *Vibhīṣhana* is at hand (*yuddha kāṇḍa* 17-10 to 15)

*Vibhīṣhana* advised *Rāvana* to surrender *Sītā*, this indicates his will to be loyal to *Śrī Rāma* By his leaving the country in which *Śrī Rāma*'s enemy lived, and by giving up his family and property, that were in the same place, it is shown that he desisted from what might be regarded as disloyalty. By the statement of *Rāvana*'s enmity to himself, his helplessness is shown, and his confidence in *Śrī Rāma* is indicated by fearlessly approaching Him, and by his description of Him as 'the refuge of all the worlds' By the statement, 'I have come to *Rāghava* as my refuge,' the request for protection is expressed Thus all the five helps stated in the preceding para are found in this *prapatti*

118 *Prapatti* possesses several advantages over meditation The former is open to all, while the latter is restricted to three castes The former is done in a few minutes, while the latter occupies a long time The former is done once only, while the latter has to be

repeated throughout life. The helps to the former are only five, and are easy, while the helps to the latter are many and difficult to acquire. Lastly, the former leads to the destruction of even the *karma* that has begun to yield fruit, while one doing meditation should expend that *karma* by enjoyment. In fact, the person doing *prapatti* may have release at any time. He may attain it at once, or at the end of the current life. His own will determines the time.

119 If what is stated is true, will not every one resort to the easier means, and make the injunctions to meditate a dead letter? *Reply* This result is obviated by permitting one to do *prapatti*, only when he is disqualified for meditation. The disqualification is of four kinds. One may not have the necessary knowledge, he may be unable to do meditation, he may not brook the delay that it involves, or he may not belong to one of the privileged castes. If any one of these be found in a person, he is disqualified. This may be shown by a homely example. Four persons go to a house holder and ask for food. He offers them rice and condiments, and asks

them to cook their own food. One of them states that he does not know how to cook, the second states that he has the knowledge but not the capacity, the third points out that though he has both knowledge and capacity, he is so hungry, that unless he is fed at once, he will die, and the last observes that being a student, he is not permitted to cook. The house holder feeds all of them. The disqualification is described as being *akinchana* i.e., as being poor in the matter of the necessary means. Connecting this with the qualification for aspiring for release stated in para 81, it will be seen that the person will be miserable as miserable as one in a burning house would be, when he saw no means of egress. He knows his own nature, is disgusted with the world, and ardently longs to go to the highest *Ātmā*. If he finds that he is unable to do meditation, which the *veda* states to be the only means will he not be miserable?

120 The description of *prapatti* is complete. Here certain doubts are raised which must be removed—

(1) Is it reasonable to suppose that *karma*, that has begun to yield fruit, will be destroyed

by *prapatti*? It may be asked in reply whether the destruction of the meditator's *karma*, that has not begun to yield fruit, is reasonable. In each case, if *karma* had to be expended by enjoyment alone, release from *karma* would be impossible as pointed out in para 95. In the case of *prapatti* the highest *Ātmā* cannot bear to see the misery of the person and cancels such portion of the *prārabdha karma* as he does not wish to experience.

(ii) We are great offenders, and the highest *Ātmā* knows all our misdeeds, and has the power to punish us. How can we appear before him? *Reply* *Śrī*, the mother of all, who is ever with Him, will intercede on our behalf, and He will not be able to say no to her.

(iii) It is said that He rewards or punishes according to the *karma* of each. How can we expect enduring bliss, while we should expect endless suffering? *Reply* He is like a father, who excuses the serious disobedience of his son, when he expresses repentance, and who gives him all his property. *Prapatti* is the expression of repentance on our part, from the relation that we bear to Him, he cancels all



our *karma*, and gives us enduring bliss in the highest heaven.

(iv) The highest *Ātmā* is a great personage Will He mind the petty effort that we make in the form of *prapatti*? Is there not great disparity between the gift asked for, and the effort made to obtain it? *Reply* His love for us is so great, that He wishes to see us happy, and regards our happiness as His own gain He is looking forward to some excuse to interfere, and treats *prapatti* as that excuse We need not therefore have any misgiving in the matter

(v) Will He give us quickly what we ask for? *Reply* He cannot bear to see the agony of one that does *prapatti*, and He therefore quickly grants our prayer and there is no one that can prevent Him

121 In conclusion it may be pointed out that *prapatti* is the means not only for attaining release from *karma* but for all other fruits. The *prapatti* made by *Vibhīṣaṇa* was not for release, but for protection from his brother *Rāvana* Here is an instance of *prapatti* for protection

*Devas* in the performance of a *yūga* forgot to give *Rudra* his offering Incensed at this,

he began to trouble the *Ādityas*, who thereupon made *prapatti* to *Indra-śūnya*, *Mitrā-varuna*, and the two *Asvins*. They protected the *Ādityas*. The *veda*, after stating this, adds that good men will save those that do *prapatti*, even though they are offenders (*Jajur*, *kūṇḍa* VI, 5, pp. 18 to 24).

In *prapattis* of this kind, there is only surrender of the burden; but not surrender of the *svarūpa* or of the fruit. Whoever longs to obtain some fruit, but is unable to adopt the means prescribed therefor may do *prapatti*, and the highest *Ātmā*, accepting the same, will give him the fruit.

## SECTION X

### SMRITIS

122 In the foregoing *paras vedaic* texts were quoted in support of every statement, and verses of the *viṣṇu purāṇa* and *bhagavad gītā* were quoted to show how they explain the *veda*. This is the function of *smṛitis*, *itihāsas*, *purāṇas* and *āgamas*. They collect the teachings scattered throughout the *veda*, reproduce them in a convenient form and explain the meaning of *vedic* texts. This work has been done by great *rishis* (seers), who knew the whole of the *veda*, and saw its meaning in *yoga* (meditation). In many cases what they teach will be found in the *veda* that we now have. In cases, in which we cannot find texts corresponding to the teaching of the *smṛitis*, we must infer from what we know that texts exist in the portion of the *veda*, that we do not know, on which the teaching is based. The *smṛitis* are therefore authorities, that we must

follow Under the term *smṛitis*, *itihāsas*, *purāṇas* and *āgamas* are included *Itihāsas* are *rāmāyaṇa* and *mahābhārata*, the *purāṇas* are well known, and *āgamas* are the *pāñcharātra*

123 There is an impression in the minds of several persons that ceremonies are unnecessary, and that it will be sufficient to meditate on the highest *Ātma* This is a vain hope We are born with many tendencies that were created and developed in previous lives, and they produce desires and aversions and through them impel us to action We cannot sit for a moment without doing action of some kind This is stated by the *bhagavad gītā*

For no one can at any time remain actionless even for an instant Irresistibly is every one made to act by the *guṇas* of his body (III 5)

Hence, a wise man should engage his senses and mind in actions, and give them work to do, but the actions should be such as will help him to adopt the proscribed means by which he will ultimately reach his goal These actions are indicated by the *veda* and are clearly stated in the *smṛitis* They must therefore be

done, till one gets rid of *karma* and attains release. This also is stated in the *bhagavad gītā*

There is nothing to do for him, that finds every kind of pleasure only in the *ātmā*  
(*Ibid*, 17)

In this verse the original uses three terms to denote pleasure, viz, *ratī*, *triptī*, and *santushtī*. The first term indicates that the person is drawn towards the *ātmā*, but not towards women, the second term that he is satisfied with the *ātmā*, but not with food and drink, and the last term that he is pleased with the *ātmā*, but not with gardens, garlands, sandal paste, dancing and music. One will become indifferent to every object of worldly enjoyment, and contemplate the *ātmā*, only when his *karma* is destroyed. Till then ceremonies are very necessary.

124 Among the good *karmas* prescribed by the *veda* two relate to one's *varṇa* (caste) as *brāhmaṇa*. One is the offering of water at sunrise. This is enjoined in the *yajur veda* thus

At one time in the past *rākṣasas* did very severe *tapas*. *Prajūpati* (the four faced being) offered to give them a boon. They

asked for this boon, viz., 'May the sun (*āditya*) fight with us' *Prajāpati* said to them 'You may fight' Hence the *rākshasas* fight with the sun from the time that he rises till he sets. People drive the *rākshasas* with water over which the *gāyatrī mantra* has been recited. Hence these persons, that recite the *veda*, standing with their face towards the east, throw up water over which the *gāyatrī mantra* has been recited. This is done, when night and day meet. This water, becoming efficacious like *vajra* (the weapon wielded by the *devatā* *Indra*) drives the *rākshasas* to the island named *aruna* owned by the *rākshasas* known as *mandhara*. By going round themselves they throw off evil *karma*. A *brāhmaṇa* should meditate on the sun that rises or sets thus 'This *āditya* is *Brahma*'. One that knows this by going round himself and by thus meditating attains every good thing (*ūraṇyaka*, p 2, *anu* 2)

Though this purports to be a statement of what is being done, it is really an injunction to offer water in the manner pointed out. By the expression 'standing with their face towards the east' the offering at sunrise is enjoined. Three things are stated here—making the offering, going round oneself (*pradakṣiṇam*) and meditation. As the last action is prescribed at sunset also, it may be

taken that the offering also should be made at sunset

125. The morning and evening offerings should be made after purification. *Smṛiti*-writers state that this should be done by sprinkling purified water on the head, and by sipping purified water, and the water is purified by reciting *mantras* over it. Three *mantras* are mentioned in the *yajur veda* for purifying the water that is sipped (*nāra*, *anu.* 23, 24 and 25). The second of these refers to bad deeds done in the day, and this indicates that it should be used for purifying before the offering at sunset is made. The next *mantra* refers to bad deeds done at night, and this shows that it should be used for purification before the offering at sunrise is made. The third *mantra*, which refers to bad deeds generally without mentioning the time, should be connected with an offering at midday. *Smṛiti*-writers prescribe this ceremony accordingly.

126. They prescribe also *japa* after the offering. *Japa* means reciting the *gāyatrī mantra*. This is stated in *anuvākas* 27 and 28 of *nārāyaṇa*. This is preceded by a *mantra* (*anuvāka* 26), in which the *devatā* in charge of

of metres is invoked, and requested to enter the *mantra*. In the *thirtieth anuśāka* the *devatā* is informed that she is at liberty to depart. These two *mantras* before and after the *gāyatrī mantra* clearly show that *japa* is intended. The *mantra* should be recited one hundred and eight times, but the number may be raised to 1008 or lowered to 10, and this latter is the least. One may ask why this *japa* is prescribed. Let us examine its meaning, which is

We meditate on that excellent *śarāpa* of  
*deva Saṁstā* (the world cause) who guides  
 our senses of perception

If one thinks on this meaning, the impurities of his heart are burnt up. This is stated in the *viśṇu purāṇa*

As a fire fanned by wind rises and burns up  
 dried grass, so *Viśṇu* staying in the heart  
 of *yogis* burns up all their impurities  
 (VI 7-65)

*Japa* has this purifying effect. It is therefore prescribed as *prāyaścitta* (penance) for impurities. The offering of water and the *japa* are known as *sandhyā upāsana*, and one without it is stated to be impure by *Manu*

One without *sandhyā* is ever impure, he is  
 unfit for any *karma*



If he does any *karma* it will lead to no fruit

127 The second *karma* of the *brāhmaṇa* caste is known as *brahma yajna* and consists in reciting a portion of one's *veda* every day. It is prescribed in the following text of the *yajur veda*

These five *mahā yajnas* (great *yajnas*) are done every day and are completed every day. They are *deva yajna*, *pitṛ yajna*, *bhūta yajna*, *manuḥya yajna* and *brahma yajna* (*ūran yajña* p 2 anu 10)

This means that they should be completed on the very day on which they are begun but not carried on to another day as other *yajnas* are. What *brahma yajna* is is next stated

The recitation of *svādhyāya* even one *ṛik yajur* or *sāman* is *brahma yajna*. By this alone it is completed (*Ibid*)

By the term *svādhyāya* reference is made to the branch of the *veda*, that has come down to one from his father and grandfather, and that alone belongs to him as compared with other branches. *Ṛik*, *yajur* and *sāman* are the names of *mantras*. *Ṛik* is a *mantra* in verse, *sāman* is the same sung, and *yajur* is any other *mantra*. The recitation should be

of a portion of the *svādhyāya*, at the least one *mantra* should be recited. This *karma* has a purifying effect, for it is prescribed as *prāyaschitta* in certain cases.

128 Two *karman*s have been prescribed for the house holder's *āśrama*. Of them one is *aupāsana*. The *veda* directs that a householder should maintain three fires, and make two offerings at about sunrise and two offerings at about sunset. These are known as *agnihotra*. *Smṛiti* writers permit one, that is unable to do this, to maintain a single fire and make two offerings in the morning and two offerings at night. This forms *aupāsana*. Those that do this should make an offering of cooked rice (*charu*) on the first day after the new moon, and on the first day after the full moon. These are known as *sthālipāka*, and take the place of the *darsa* and *purnamāsa* *ishtis* described in para 8. They have to be made in pursuance of the arrangement referred to in para 5, under which offerings are made to *devatās*, and gifts are received from them.

129 The second *karma* is the doing of the four *yajnas* other than *brahma yajna* stated in para 127. They consist of offerings from the

first meal prepared for the day for the householder. They are thus described in the same *veda*

What is offered into the fire, be it a *samīd* (twig), is *deva yajna*. It is completed by one offering. What is offered to the *pitris* with the word *s adhū*, be it water, is *pitri-yajna*. It is completed by one offering. What is offered to cows and other animals is *bhūta yajna*. It is completed by one offering. The offering of food to *brāhmanas* is *manushya yajna*. It is completed by one offering (*Āranyaka* p 2, *anu* 10)

These offerings are made in pursuance of the principle that one should not prepare food for himself. It should be prepared for offering to the highest *Ātmā*, as will be explained in the next para, and for making these other offerings. One should take what remains for himself. Preparing food for one self is thus condemned.

Those that cook food for their own sakes are sinful persons and eat sin (*bhagavad gītā*, III-13)

130 Two *karmas* are prescribed by the *pāñcharātra āgama*, viz., the *japa* of the *mantra* of eight syllables, and worship, (*ārādhana*) of the highest *Ātmā*. The *mantra* means—‘I exist only for *Nārāyaṇa*, His

service is my goal, and *prapatti* is the means therefor' In addition to its purifying effect, *japa* impresses these points on the mind. Worship cannot be done to the *svarūpa* of the highest *Ātmā*, for it cannot be seen or touched. His figures known as *para* and *vyūha* are separated from us by distance in place, and the *vibhava* figures by distance in time. The figure known as *hārda* is fit for the *yogi*. Our only refuge is the figure known as *archā* (see para 75). It is an image made of gold, silver, or copper, in which He is present in His own form at the worshipper's prayer. The worship should be done in the same manner, in which an honoured guest is received. It consists of sixteen items which are

- (1) *avāhana*—requesting Him to be present in the image, (2) *āsana*—giving Him a seat,
- (3) *arghya*—giving water for washing the hands, (4) *pādya*—giving water for washing the feet,
- (5) *āchamana*—giving water for sipping, (6) *snāna*—giving a bath, (7) *rastra*—presenting new cloth, (8) *bhūṣana*—giving ornaments, (9) *gandha*—presenting sandal paste, (10) *pushpa*—presenting flowers, (11) *dhūpa*—showing incense, (12) *dīpa*—showing a lamp, (13) *nivedana*

—offering food, (14) *pradakṣiṇa*—going round Him, (15) prostrating before Him, (16) *udvāsana*—stating that He is free to depart. If worship be done in the stone known as *sālagrāma*, the first and last items should be omitted, for He is said to be ever present in it. The highest *Ātmā* is the lord of changeless and changing worlds, but if the worship be done with love (*bhakti*), he will accept it, for what He requires is merely love. This is stated

Whosoever offers to Me a leaf, a flower a fruit or a cup of water with love that thing brought to Me with love and with a pure mind I eat (*bhagavad gītā*, IX 26)

131 The *veda* has a high ideal for us, *viz.*, that we should learn the *veda*, that we should do the prescribed ceremonies that being rendered fit thereby we should meditate on Him or do *prapatti* according to our capacity, and that we should go to the highest heaven and enjoy Him for ever. We should gratefully accept this ideal, and work up to reach it. But if we refuse to admit the authority of the *veda* and *smṛitis*, and treat the ceremonies with contempt, we shall never be able to control the senses and the mind, we shall not

know the right from the wrong; we shall be engrossed in the pleasures of the senses; and never come out of *samsāra*. The highest *Ātma* can only lament that we are so foolish; being the all-Ruler, He cannot interfere in individual actions, and will have to wait for the time that we shall do some good deed without knowing or intending it.

## SECTION XI

### UTTARA KRITYA

132 Very few persons in doing *prapatti* ask that they should be taken to the highest heaven at once. They only ask that when they die, they should not be reborn. How should they live after the *prapatti* till they die? The answer is given in detail in the *rahasyatraya s̥ara* of *Śrī Desika*. A summary is given here for convenience of reference. In the first place the *prapanna* (one that has done *prapatti*) should firmly hold the knowledge of his own *svarūpa*, of the *prapatti* that has been done and of the fruit that he will attain. If he remembers his *svarūpa*, he will never be angry, when he is insulted. If the insult refers to his body, he will think 'This does not affect me, for I am different from the body'. If a fault be stated that refers to himself, he will consider whether it exists, and if it does he will be grateful for its being pointed out. If it does not exist,

he will treat it as a warning, so that he may avoid it. In any case he will remember that the highest *Ātmā*, who controls the insulter, as he controls himself, has used him as an instrument for punishing him for some past deed, and he will be glad that one *karma* has been wiped out. If he remembers the *prapatti* that has been done, he will never take any further steps to procure his release, nor will he ever go to any *devatā* for this purpose. If he remembers the fruit that he will attain, he will welcome any illness that threatens to end his life and meet death with cheerfulness.

133 His goal is to reach the highest *Ātmā* and serve Him. This service should begin here immediately after the *prapatti*. He does not now know what service will be acceptable to Him, he must therefore learn it from the *veda* and the *smṛitis*. Of the various kinds of service, which they point out, he should select such as he can do, and avoid what will require a long time to do, for it is not certain when he will die. He is like a person waiting for the ferry-boat that will take him to the other side of a river. Every work that is begun, should be reported to the highest *Ātmā* in the



figure, in which he worships Him, it should be done in the prescribed mode with love as an end in itself. The service of the highest *Ātmā* includes the service of those that love Him. There are certain marks by which one may know who loves the highest *Ātmā*. They are (i) He will love those that love Him, and ignore their faults, as he ignores the faults of his wife and children, (ii) He will express his pleasure at the worship done by one, and not pick holes in it, as is generally done in the world, (iii) He will make efforts to do worship, (iv) He will love to hear stories about the highest *Ātmā*, and go to where they are related, (v) On hearing the stories marks of his pleasure will appear in his eyes and in his speech, (vi) He will do worship as an end in itself, and not that others may praise him for it. (vii) He will ever think of the highest *Ātmā*, as worldly men think of their wife and children, and (viii) He will never ask anything of Him for himself.

134 He should not be satisfied that he has done *prapatti*, he should go to a learned man, that loves the highest *Ātmā*, and learn from him all about Him. He should live in close

touch with one that loves Him, and that does the duties of his position properly, and adopt what is suitable to his own position. He should never be conceited that he has learning and good practice. By the grace of the highest *Ātmā* he may attain some of the steps that precede release. To prevent undue elation and conceit he must think of his own unworthiness. He must not be depressed by the thought of what he was before, he should be glad that he has reached his present condition. If there is a temple, in which worship is done to the highest *Ātmā*, he should go to it every day and see His figure. If he sees Him with love from the seat on which He is up to His head, even his great sins will be destroyed. He should ever think with gratitude of what his *āchārya* and the highest *Ātmā* have done for him. He should loyally obey the commands and prohibitions of the *veda* and *smṛitis*, and if any misdeed happens owing to the influence of *prārabdha karma*, he should do the prescribed *prāyaschitta*, or *prapatti*, if he be unable to do the penance, should he fail to do so, he will be punished somehow before his death, but the punishment will be light. His release will not

be delayed beyond the moment, at which it should come. Lastly, he should live where there is a temple of the highest *Ātmā*, and where persons that love Him reside. If he cannot secure both, he should prefer the place where these persons live.

## SECTION XII

### OTHER RELIGIONS

135 In conclusion it will be useful to notice very briefly the other religions that prevailed in India from time to time, and to show how they are inadequate. They have been grouped into *bāhya matas* and *ludṛishṭi mata*°. The former are those that do not acknowledge the authority of the *veda*, and the latter are those that while acknowledging its authority misinterpret its texts. Among the *bāhya* religions are the *sāṅkhya*, *yoga*, *vaisheshika*, *saugata*, *ārḥata* and *pāsupata* religions. Of them the *sāṅkhya* recognises the existence of matter and of *jīvas*, but not the existence of the all-Controller. Matter is said to evolve and become the universe without direction by an intelligent being. This is opposed to our experience, for timber does not become a car, unless it is worked up by a carpenter. The *jīva* is *jñāna*, i.e., he shows himself, but he is

incapable of change of condition (*nir-vikāra*), and cannot therefore know, act or feel. What acts is matter. This also is opposed to experience. The *sāṅkhya* in the same breath states that by proximity of matter to himself the *jīva* mistakes its activity for his activity, and is therefore bound, and that by knowing the truth he becomes free. This explanation is unsound, for being incapable of change, the *jīva* cannot see, and one that cannot see cannot misperceive. There are many other inconsistencies in this religion. The religion of the *yoga sūtras* follows the *sāṅkhya* religion, except that it recognises *Īśvara*, but He is only the operative cause of the world, and not also the material cause as taught by the *veda*.

136 The *vaiśeṣika* recognises the existence of matter of the *jīvas* and of *Īśvara*. Matter consists of earth atoms, water atoms, fire atoms, air atoms, ether, which is one, indivisible and eternal, and minds, which are atomic and eternal. The atoms move towards one another, and by aggregation form the various things seen in the world-bodies of *jīvas*, their senses and objects of their enjoyment. Why do the atoms move towards one another? The

reply is given that they are moved by the *adrishṭas* of the *jivas*. *Adrishṭa* is said to be the capacity created in the *jiva* by his *īkarmas* (actions). But this is not sound. The capacities are in the *jivas* and not in the atoms. Let it be assumed that they move the atoms through the *jivas*, who contact them, for they are said to be omnipresent. Then, being non-intelligent, they must move them always. It might be said that the capacities wait for their own time to yield their fruits, and they may create the world at the same moment. This is an impossible task, for the *jivas* are numberless, they do not work in unison and at the same time, and to assume that the *adrishṭas* of all yield their fruits in the same moment and lead to the formation of the world is unreasonable. Next, the *jiva* is said to be *jaḍa*, i.e., that he does not show himself. He does not possess *jñāna* as a permanent attribute. Knowledge comes, when he contacts his mind, and disappears, when the contact ceases. In release the mind not being present, there is no consciousness, and the *jiva* is like a piece of stone. His goal is not enjoyment of bliss, it is mere destruction of suffering. *Īvara*

is merely the operative cause, and it is sought to prove His existence by inference. The inference is The world being a product, must have been made by an omniscient and omnipotent maker, but this does not prove the point, as no example can be shown of an omniscient and omnipotent maker making a product. In inferring the existence of fire on a hill from the presence of smoke on it, we recall to our mind the co existence of smoke and fire in many a kitchen. We require a similar example, which however is not available. The proof therefore fails.

137 Among the *saugatas* (buddhists) there are four schools. The first school recognises the existence of matter in the form of four kinds of atoms as in the *vaisheshika* religion. In this religion there is no ether, no *jiva*, no *Īsvara*, what goes by the name *ātma* is streams of perceptions, thoughts or feelings. What is peculiar to this religion is the view that everything that exists remains for one moment only, and then disappears, and that it is succeeded by an exactly similar thing, so that everything is a stream of momentary existences. The objection to the formation of the world

from atoms stated in the preceding para applies to this religion also. There is this additional objection. When the atoms, that move towards one another in one moment, perish in that moment, how can a two-atom aggregate emerge? When a thing disappears, how can an exactly similar thing come into existence, unless we assume that a thing can come out of nothing. How can an existing thing disappear without a cause. We have not seen either creation or destruction without a cause. Lastly, the alleged momentariness is disproved by facts of recognition. Seeing a thing now, we say 'It is that thing, i.e., a thing seen at a past moment'. The existence of the same thing at two moments shows that it does not exist for one moment only. It may be said that we are deceived by the likeness between two things that exist at two different moments, but this explanation is not available to the *saugata*, who does not recognise a person that sees them at two different moments. This religion is opposed to the *veda* and to our experience in every respect.

138 The second school recognises the existence of an external world, as the first



school does, but its existence should in its view be proved by inference. Objects bestow their characters on our cognition, and though they disappear in the next moment, we may infer from the characters that the objects existed. This view is unsound, for the particular character of a perception cannot be the character of an object that has disappeared and has ceased to exist, such a thing has not been seen. When an object disappears, its attribute cannot be seen in another object. A reflection on a mirror subsists only so long as an object is present before it, but not after it has moved off.

139 The third school denies the existence of an external world altogether. To deny the existence of objects other than perceptions is not possible for perception is seen as possessing this character—to make it possible for a knower *ātma* to speak about a particular object. Every one, as is well known, perceives thus ‘I see a jar’. This act of perception is connected with a person as perceiver and with a thing as its object, and it is vivid perception, of which all the world is witness. For one with this very evidence to allege that

perception alone is real must expose him to the derision of the whole world

140 The last school denies the existence of every thing. In its view what is known as the world is a void, and the truth is that there is nothing. Let us enquire whether this statement is made on some authority. If so, the reality of that authority is admitted, if not, there is no proof, and everything is real.

141 The *ārṇata* (*jaina*) recognises the existence of matter and the *jīvas*, but denies that an all-Controller exists. He too states that the world has evolved from atoms, the atoms are not however of four classes as in the *vaiśeṣika's* theory, they are of one class only, and the other elements are formed by change of condition. The peculiar feature of this religion is that every substance possesses contradictory qualities—existence and non-existence, permanency and perishability, oneness and separateness. This is absurd. An object, that is in the condition denoted by the term 'exists,' cannot at the same time be in the reverse condition denoted by the term 'does not exist.' For a substance to be the seat

of changes known as origination and destruction is to be perishable. How can the reverse—to be eternal—be found in it? Being the seat of incompatible attributes constitute difference between two objects, and oneness is the reverse. How can difference and oneness co-exist in the same thing? There is another feature of this religion the mention of which should not be omitted. According to the *sāṅkhya* and *vaiśeṣika* the *jīva* is omnipresent. This was disproved in para 33. In the *ārṇata* religion he is of the size of his body. If so, when one, that was in an elephant's body, leaves it to enter the body of an ant, only a portion of the *jīva* can go in, and what is in the ant's body will not be the full *atmā*. In order to get over this difficulty, if it be assumed that the *jīva* is capable of contraction and expansion, then like an earthen jar, the *jīva* will exist for a limited period of time, he will be incapable of knowing or of benefiting by knowledge.

142 The *pāsupata* religion is opposed to the *veda*, as its teaching in regard to the *tatvas*, the means of reaching release and *achāra* (right conduct) is different. It states *Pasupati*

to be the highest *devata* and to be capable of proof by inference, and He is only the operative cause of the world. Those, that rely only on inference, should follow what is seen in the world and regard the maker of the world as directing its evolution as the potter directs the evolution of jars from a lump of earth. But unlike the potter *Pasupati* has no body, for only those that have bodies are seen to be able to direct. If it be said that possession of a body by *Pasupati* must be admitted, it must have consisted of parts, and whether it was perishable or not, there are insuperable difficulties, which cannot be got over. If it be supposed that he directs, as the *jiva* directs his senses, then as the *jiva* experiences pleasure and pain, *Pasupati* too must experience them, and must be subject to *karma*. The religion is therefore unsound.

143      Passing on to the *kudrishi* religions the first to be noticed is *Ṣankara's*. His theory is as follows. *Brahma* alone exists, nothing else. The universe, consisting of numberless persons that perceive and of numberless objects that are perceived, does not really exist. *Brahma* does not possess any attribute, and

He is mere *chit* or *prakāśa* (light), but not *prakāśa* of a substance like the light of a lamp. Owing to *avidyā*, which prevents Him from appearing as He is, He perceives an unreal world. The statement that the universe does not really exist is opposed to the perception of every one. An object is said to exist, when its first perception is not subsequently nullified. If it be shown that the object did not exist at the place and at the time, at which it was first seen, we say that the object is unreal (*mithyā*), and that the person that perceived it was deluded. In this sense the universe is not illusion, for our perception of it is not subsequently nullified. If an object that is first perceived at a particular place and at a particular time, is found not to exist at another time, we conclude that it is perishable. It is not unreal. *Śaṅkara* tries to prove his statement by arguments, which are specious, and cannot stand examination. He next tries to prove it by quoting *vedic* and *smṛiti* texts. These texts are not stray statements, but are connected with texts that go before, and with texts that follow. They must therefore be interpreted with reference to them. This is not what

has been done, the texts are taken out of the contexts, and interpreted so as to agree with his theory. This is not legitimate. The statement that *Brahma* is without any attribute is also untenable. We are not aware of any substance that is of this description. Sense perception is perception of a thing with its attributes. For instance, when a rose is seen, it is perceived to possess a certain shape, and a certain colour, when it is touched, it is found to be soft, when it is smelt, not only the smell, but its peculiar character is also perceived at the same time. No object is perceived without these particulars. For the same reason we cannot accept the statement that *prakāśa* (light) exists apart from a substance. Having made these statements, which are opposed to our perception, *Śaṅkara* tries to support them by putting forward the *avidyā* theory. This cannot be maintained. Being *prakāśa* (light), *Brahma* appears as he is, and *avidyā* cannot prevent Him from doing so. If, nevertheless, *avidyā* can do this, the *prakāśa* must be destroyed, and *Brahma* being mere *prakāśa*, must cease to exist. In a case of misperception, as in the perception of shell-silver as silver, there is a

real defect, viz, imperfect light, it rests on the shell-silver, and there is a person that sees it and mistakes it for silver. In the case of *Brahma*, the defect, *avidyā*, is unreal, it cannot rest on *Brahma*, and *Brahma* cannot see, as He is not the seat of the attribute *jñāna*. Illusion cannot therefore take place.

144. The next theory is *Bhaskara's*. He recognises the existence of minute particles of matter, known as *antah karana*, and states that *Brahma* becomes *jivas* by contact with them. The part of *Brahma* not so contacted is *Brahma*. In this theory, as the *jiva* is merely a condition in which *Brahma* exists, the *jiva's* suffering must pertain to *Brahma* Himself. This is opposed to the *vedic* statement that *Brahma* is free from every imperfection. The third theory is that of *Yadava prakāsa*, in which *Īsvara*, the *jivas* and matter are evolved from *Sat*. This is opposed to the *vedic* statements that there is nothing higher than *Īsvara*, and that the *jiva* is not born. The last theory, that of *Vachaspati*, is *Śankara's* theory, except that the *avidyā* rests on the *jiva* instead of on *Brahma*. This theory cannot be

2 We have had no *Vishishtadvaita* philosophy presented in the manner we have it in his (author's) contribution to Indology. He has made a very technical subject as much non-technical as possible, without sacrificing at the same time the technical spirit and exactitude, in which philosophy has to be grasped. (A Govindacharya Swami of Mysore, M R A S)

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# ELEMENTS OF VEDIC RELIGION

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## SECTION I

### THE VEDA

THE *Veda* is the highest authority among the descendants of the Aryans of India. It is known as the *veda*, as it makes known the means by which the ends, that are sought, may be attained. It is known also as *sruti*, as it has been ever heard, that is, there was no time in the past, in which it was not recited in the form, in which it now appears. It is therefore said to be *ntyā* (eternal).

2 Here some questions may be asked. (1) *Vasishṭha* and other *ṛishis* (seers) are said to have made this or that text of the *veda*. How can the *veda* be eternal? Reply *Vasishṭha* was an officer in the economy of nature, his

business being to go into meditation and to perceive the texts of the *veda*, as they were known before, i.e., what were the sounds that make up a text, their order and the accents with which they were pronounced. On this work, the four-faced *Brahmā* employed other seers also, endowing them with the necessary capacity. Because the texts were only reproduced, the *veda* is said to be eternal, and because they were seen by this or that seer, they are said to have been made by them. There is thus no real inconsistency.

3 (ii) Here is a story recited in the *yajur veda*.

When *Manu* divided his property among his sons, he left out his son *Nābhunedīshṭa*, who was with a teacher learning the *veda*. On his return home, he asked his father why no portion was given to himself. The father replied, 'Certain *ṛishis* named *Angiras* are performing a *satra yāga*, but not knowing a *brāhmaṇa* that will take them to *svarga* (heaven world), they are perplexed. Draw their attention to this *brāhmaṇa*, they will leave all their cows with you, when they go to *svarga*. The son did as he was directed and got the cows. But when he drove them home, *Rudra* came and stopped him, saying that whatever was left on the sacrificial grounds was his property.

After some discussion *Nabhānedīshṭa* agreed to offer to *Rudra* the soma juice that remained in the *manthi graha* after the offering to *Indra* was made, and *Rudra* waived his claim to the cows. Following the precedent thus set, the offering to *Rudra* is made in every soma *yūga* (*Ā 3, pra 1, p 29 and 31*)

Stories similar to this are found in many parts of the *veda*, and they must have been written after the incidents related therein took place. How can the whole of the *veda* be said to be eternal? *Reply* This objection having been raised before, *Jaimini*, the author of the *pūrva mīmāṃsā sūtras*, gave the reply that the stories were intended merely to praise the *karmas* that were enjoined and that the facts stated need not be taken to be true. This reply is not available to the *vedāntin*, who regards all *vedic* texts as stating what actually took place. The proper reply is that as men by means of *yoga* (meditation) are able to see what occurred in the past, and what may happen in the future, the *veda* foresaw what would take place and stated them. In order to show that their occurrence was certain, the facts mentioned are stated to have actually taken place. For a precedent for this mode of



expression see *bhagavad gītā*, chapter XI, verse 33, in which *Śrī Kṛishṇa* told *Arjuna* :

These (his enemies) have been slain already  
by Me alone, be you mere *nimitta* (instrument)

*Arjuna's* enemies had not been killed, for the battle had not begun, but their killing was certain, for *Śrī Kṛishṇa*, the all-Ruler, had so willed

4 The *veda*, which is eternal, has been handed down from teacher to student without a break, and had therefore no beginning or end at any time. Even after *pralaya*, in which all teachers, including the four-faced *Brahmā* disappeared, the teaching of the *veda* was started again by the highest *Ātmā* as stated by the text—

Who formerly made *Brahmā* and gave him  
the *veda* (*ṣveta*, VI-18)

From this fact the following results flow.  
(1) Not being made, it is free from the defects, that characterise what is made. A statement made by a person cannot be implicitly accepted, for he may not have carefully observed what he states, he may not state it as it

# ELEMENTS OF VEDIC RELIGION

AS EXPOUNDED BY *ŚRĪ RĀMAṆUJA*

BY

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occurred, and he may not be willing to speak the truth. The *veda* is free from these defects, and its testimony may be fully accepted (ii) Next, in matters, which are beyond the cognisance of sense perception or inference, one must rely on testimony alone. What the *veda* states should therefore be accepted, as it is stated (iii) Where however the *veda* repeats a fact that may be known from other sources of knowledge, and the fact conflicts with one's experience, the words should be understood in a secondary sense *e.g.*, in the sentence 'The *yūpa* (1) is the sun the *yūpa* being actually seen, it is not identified with the sun, and the word 'sun' (*āditya*) is taken to mean 'shining like the sun' (iv) The *veda* being one work, no conflict between any two texts should be admitted, and they are so explained that the apparent conflict disappears. It is hardly necessary to add that every text of the *veda* serves some purpose, and to reject a text as having no meaning is a serious fault.

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(1) *Yūpa* is a post, to which the goat to be offered in a *paśu yūga* is tied. Being smeared with ghee, when the light falls upon it, it shines.

## SECTION II

### THE EARLIER PORTION OF THE VEDA

5 LET us now examine what the *veda* teaches. It points out to every one the means to the ends that he has in view, and these ends are different for different individuals. Those, that identify themselves with their bodies, will seek enjoyment that appeals to the senses. They are known as *aiśikam*—enjoyment here and now. Those, that know that they are other than their bodies, will seek a superior kind of enjoyment, that is not alloyed with pain, and will be willing to take very great trouble to procure it, and to wait for its coming. This is known as *āmushmīkam*, i.e., enjoyment there—in a place called *svarga*. The means to the *aiśikam* and *āmushmīkam* are taught in the earlier portion of the *veda*. They are *yāgas* of various kinds, *yāga* being an offering made to a *devatā*. A *devatā* is a *jīva* possessing greater knowledge and power than men, and

exercising some authority conferred on him as a reward for the good deeds done by him in the past. The arrangement made by the all-Ruler is that men should do *yāgas* to please the *devatās*, and that the *devatās* should give their worshippers what they require. This will appear from the following text.

*Vāyu* is indeed a quickly-acting *devatā*, he (the worshipper) approaches *Vāyu* alone with his own offering, *Vāyu* causes wealth to come to him

There are similar texts scattered throughout the *veda*, and this teaching is generalised thus in the *bhagavad gītā*

At the time of creation the Lord of all created beings along with *yajnas* (1) and said 'With this (2) attain fullness. It will give you what you desire. With this satisfy the *devas*, the *devas* will satisfy you. Satisfying each other, you will reach the highest good. For the *devas*, satisfied with *yajnas*, will give you what you desire' (III-10, 11 and 12)

(1) *Yajna* is synonymous with *yāga*. The root is the same, but the terminations are different.

(2) The term 'this' refers to *yajnas* taken collectively.

6 The *devatās*, that are frequently mentioned, are *Agni*, *Indra*, *Soma*, *Vāyu*, *Mitra*, *Varuna*, *Prajāpati* and *Viṣṇu*. In regard to some *yāgas* the *devatā* consists of two personages, like *Agni* and *Soma*, who form the *devatā* known as *Agnishomau*, *Indra* and *Agni* form the *devatā* *Indragni*. Again, the same being, having different names, forms different *devatās*. The sun has three names—*sūrya*, *saṁitā* and *pūshan*, *Sūrya*, *Saṁitā* and *Pūshan* are treated as different *devatās*. Further, the same being becomes different *devatās* with reference to his epithets. Thus, *Indra* is a different *devatā* from *Mahendra* (great *Indra*).

7 The materials offered to *devatās* are of various kinds

(i) In some cases the material is paddy or *yava* (a kind of grain). The paddy is husked, the rice is pounded and the rice flour is fried and made into a ball, which is then baked. In this form the material is known as *puro-ḍaṣa*. If the rice is cooked, it is known as *charu*.

(ii) In some cases the offering consists of cow's milk, curd or ghee. It may be a mixture of curd and ghee, known as *prishad-ajyam*.

Sometimes, a little curd is dropped into boiling milk, which then separates into two parts—a hard part known as *āmukshā*, and a watery part known as *vājnam*. The former is the offering to soma *devatās*

(iii) In some *yāgas* the offering consists of a *pasu* (a four-footed animal) This is a goat (*chāga*) in most cases The offering is made in two forms First, the *vapā* of the animal (a membrane covering the stomach apparently) is taken out, and is fried in ghee over the fire, and the whole of it is offered This is known as *vapā yāga* Then the heart tongue, breast and eight other parts are taken out, and are boiled in water Two small bits are cut out from each part and are offered This is known as *anga yāga*

(iv) In many cases, the *soma* creeper is crushed with a piece of stone, and the juice diluted with water is offered to several *devatās*

8 The *yāgas* pointed out as the means to *aihiḥkam* and *āmushmikam* are of various kinds

(i) Two offerings are made every day about sunrise and sunset, known as *agnihotram* The *devatās* are *Sūrya* and *Prajāpati* in the

morning, and *Agni* and *Prajāpati* in the evening, and the material is cow's milk, but any other material among those prescribed may be used instead. This should be done throughout life.

(ii) *Darsa* and *purnamāsa ists* (1) Each consists of three offerings, of which the *devatās* and materials are as follows

	<i>Darṣa</i>	<i>Purnamāsa</i>
	<i>Devatā material</i>	<i>Devatā material</i>
First offering	<i>Agni puroḍāsa</i>	<i>Agni puroḍāsa</i>
Second offering	<i>Indra milk</i>	<i>Vishṇu ghee</i>
Third offering	<i>Indra curd</i>	<i>Agnishomau puroḍāsa</i>

The *darsa ists* is commenced on the new-moon day and is completed on the next day, and the *purnamāsa ists* is begun on the full-moon day and is finished on the next day. Both form one *karma* (action), and should be done throughout life.

(iii) *Agnishṭoma*. This is a *soma yāga*. The *soma* creeper is crushed thrice—in the

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(1) The term *ists* is synonymous with *yāga*. The root is the same, but the termination is different.



morning, at mid day, and in the evening, and on each occasion the juice is offered to various *devatās*. The crushing is known as *savanam*, so that there are three *savanams* in the day—morning *savanam*, midday *savanam* and the third *savanam*. The *soma yāga* is served by five *īshṭis* and three *pasu yāgas*, and the *soma* offerings take place on the last day, generally the fifth day.

9 *Pasu yāgas* are generally subsidiary to *soma yāgas*, and in some cases they have an independent existence. All other *yāgas* taught by the *veda* are performed like the *darsa* and *purnamāsa īshṭis*, or like *agnishtoma*. Among those done like the latter, some are *ekāha soma yāgas*, in which the *soma* offerings are made on one day. In the *ahīna soma yāgas* they are made on more than one day and on less than twelve days. In the *dvādasāham* they are made on twelve days, and in *satra soma yāgas* they are made on more than twelve days. The *yajamāna* (one that does a *yāga*) is one in the *īshṭi* and *ekāha* and *ahīna soma yāgas*, but in the *satra soma yāgas* the number of *yajamānas* ranges from seventeen to twenty-four. The *dvādasāham* may be done by one *yajamāna* like

the *ahina*, or by many *yajamānas* like the *satra yāga*. It partakes of the nature of both

10 Of the *yāgas* taught by the *veda*, the *agnihotra*, the *darsa pūrnāmāsa īshṭis* and *agnishṭoma soma yāga* are compulsory (*niitya*), and should be done by every house-holder, unless he be disqualified. Their performance brings no personal benefit to the *yajamāna*, but failure on his part is visited with punishment. Why is this duty imposed on him? The reply is furnished by certain *mantras* that are recited, when five ghee offerings are made after the distribution of rewards to the helpers in a *soma yāga*. The substance of the *mantras* is—'As those qualified to do *yāgas* fail to perform them, the *devatās* are displeased, and withhold the rainfall. People suffer from want of food in consequence. Seeing this, *ṛishis* (-ages) state that they are bad men. May this reproach be removed from me, and may I be enabled to perform *soma yāgas* every spring?' (*yajur*, ka 3, pra 2, pp 29 to 32). So the *yajamāna* prays. The performance of the compulsory *yāgas* is public service, and the kings, who ruled over India, and had respect for the *veda*, gave

*brāhmanas* tax-free land, placed them above want, and saw that they duly discharged this public duty

11. All other *yāgas* are *kāmya*. They should be performed, if particular fruits are desired, but their non-performance is not visited with punishment. While pointing out these means to the fruits that men desire, the *veda* gives the warning that the fruits are petty and short-lived. Here are some texts

- (i) As the fruit earned by *karma* perishes here, so does the fruit of good deeds perish there (*chāndo*, VIII-1-6), (ii) The *karmas* performed by him have surely an end (*brīhad*, V-8-9), (iii) These rafts in the form of *yāgas* are not strong (*muṇḍa*, I-2-7)

In the first text reference is made by the term *karma* to the service of the king, and its fruit quickly perishes. So the fruits of good deeds perish there, i.e., in *svarga*. In the second text reference is made, as will appear from the context, to *karmas* performed without a knowledge of *Brahma*, even though they be done for a long time, and even though they be of many kinds. By the *karmas* having an end, reference is made to their fruits. Actions disappear soon after they are done, and this

does not require to be taught. One may be under the impression that the fruits earned by worldly men are perishable, but that by *karmas* enduring fruits may be attained. The third text shows that this impression is erroneous. Thus the nature of *āmushmikam* is pointed out. The defects of *aihikam* are patent. Some desire offspring, but the parents are filled with anxiety every time that a child falls ill. Wealth is sought, but it raises a host of enemies against its owner. Long life is wished for, but the man that lives long sees relation after relation dying around him. *Aihikam* is procured with effort, it is alloyed with pain, and it is short lived. This is especially the case in enjoyments generated by contact of the senses with outside objects.



7 JUN 1985

## SECTION III

### THE UPANISHADS

12 A WISE man should therefore seek fruits that are very superior, that are unmixed with pain and that will endure for ever. Such fruits are attainable in the world known as the highest heaven (*parama vyoman* or *vaikhuntha*)

One that meditates on *Brahma* attains the highest Regarding this the following verse is stated in explanation Unchanging, shining and without limitations is *Brahma* Who meditates on Him as seated in the cavity of his heart, he will in the highest heaven enjoy all good qualities with *Brahma* the all-knowing (*āna*, I-1 and 2)

The meaning is that the meditator will enjoy *Brahma* and His good qualities The expression is like 'He eats food with milk'. The existence of this fruit and the means by which it may be attained are taught in the later portion of the *veda*, known as the *upanishads* This necessarily needs a description of *Brahma* to be reached, of the *jiva* that

- (iv) All embodied *jīvas*,
- (v) The *jīva*'s instruments—*prāṇa*, speech, eye, ear, mind, and skin,—also semen

This description may be taken to represent everything else not specially mentioned. The *upaniṣad* is so explained by the *bhagavad gītā*

There is nothing moving or unmoving that can exist without Me (X 39)

This is the statement made by *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, who appears from the book to be *Brahma*, the world-cause. These texts show that *Brahma* is in every object, be it a product of matter, or a *jīva*, that it is his body, and that He rules it from within. He is therefore its *ātma*. The term *ātma* means an intelligent being, who pervades an object and controls it.

15 Now in worldly usage words, denoting unintelligent bodies in the form of *devas*, men and the like, denote only the *ātma*, to whom they pertain. Thus in the statement '*Devadatta* is stout' the term 'stout' denotes the body, and through it a *jīva* in that body, and the sentence means '*Devadatta* is the *jīva* in the stout body.' Similarly in the statement

'All this indeed is *Brahma*,' the term 'all this' denotes 'the Being, who is the *ātmā* in all this,' and the sentence means 'the Being who is the *ātmā* in all this is *Brahma* indeed' The other text similarly means 'The Being, who is your *ātmā*, is that described as the world cause,' and the direction is given that *Śvetaketu* should meditate on Him as his *ātmā*

16 Understanding the texts in this manner, the conflict, that appeared in the two sets of texts, disappears *Brahma*, the *jivas* and matter differ from one another in their *svarūpas* (substance) and in their natures, but as they bear to one another the relation of body and *ātmā*, they are spoken of as being identical The *jiva* is the *ātmā* of his body, and *Brahma* is the *ātmā* of both *jivas* and products of matter, and He is therefore denoted by words that ordinarily denote *jivas* or material products Thus, when a little white earth is put on our forehead every day, we recite the *man'tra*—'Earth! destroy my *pāpa* (evil deeds)',—and we address *Brahma* who is within the earth. When we sip water in the performance of the daily *sandhyā* and say 'may this water purify earth,' we pray to *Brahma*, who is within the



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ana.</i>	Ānandavalli.
<i>Bṛihad.</i>	Bṛihad Āraṇyaka upanishad.
<i>Bhṛigu.</i>	Bhṛiguvalli.
<i>Chāndo.</i>	Chāndogya upanishad.
<i>Īṣa.</i>	Īṣāvāsyā upanishad.
<i>Kaṭha.</i>	Kaṭhavalli.
<i>Kaushi.</i>	Kaushītaki brāhmaṇa.
<i>Muṇḍa.</i>	Muṇḍaka upanishad.
<i>Nārā.</i>	Nārāyaṇam of Taittirīya upanishad.
<i>Puru.</i>	Puruṣa sūkta.
<i>Śveta.</i>	Śvetāśvatara upanishad.
<i>Subā.</i>	Subala upanishad.
<i>Taitti.</i>	Taittirīya upanishad.

## FOREWORD

MANY educated gentlemen, who belong to the school of *Śrī Rāmānuja*, are anxious to know what their religion is. But owing to pressure of official or professional duties, they have not the time to go to a *guru* and learn from him. For their benefit this little book has been written. The religion expounded by *Śrī Rāmānuja* is taught by the *veda* according to his interpretation of the texts. To point this out, the name "ELEMENTS OF VEDIC RELIGION" has been given to this book. Every statement in it is supported by a text of the *veda* and verses from the *bhagavad gītā* and *viṣṇu purāṇa* are quoted only to show how they explain *vedic* texts, and this is their proper function. Explanation has been added from the *upaniṣad bhāṣya* of *Ranga Rāmānuja*, wherever necessary. The book is based wholly on *Śrī Bhāṣyam*, and reproduces its contents in a convenient form. It is hoped that it will enable the readers to take up the *Śrī Bhāṣyam*.

itself and understand its teaching. A full table of contents is prefixed to the work.

2 The table of contents was translated into Tamil, and was submitted to my Guru (Sri Rangan Andavan), who was pleased to observe "I have read through the whole of it, It is very good." It is with his blessing that this is published.

*Kumbakonam*  
3rd April, 1931

V K RAMANUJACHARI